

STATE OF THE CHURCH: WHEN BEING

"RIGHT" IS BIBLICALLY WRONG —page 12

TRUTH

FOR THE
TIME *is*
COME THAT
JUDGMENT

TH

MUST
BEGIN *at*
THE HOUSE
of GOD...

—1 PETER 4:17

Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?

Ye shall say, Nay, but rather tribulation. — Luke 12:51

The
Berean
Call

OCTOBER 2012

JESUS GETS TOUGH — PART TWO

by T. A. McMAHON

NEW! THE HARBINGER: FACT OR FICTION?

TBC publishes Dave James's response to The Harbinger



The Harbinger: Fact or Fiction?

James—*The Harbinger*, a *New York Times* best-selling book from Charisma Media, authored by Rabbi/Pastor Jonathan Cahn, is about a series of signs, or omens, that the author believes have manifested in America. In order to make sense of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Cahn believes he has discovered an “ancient mystery” in Isaiah 9:10 that “explains everything from 9/11 to the collapse of the global economy.” However, as David James, co-founder and executive director of The Alliance for Biblical Integrity, exhaustively documents in *The Harbinger: Fact or Fiction?* there are serious flaws throughout *The Harbinger*, with significant exegetical and theological pitfalls that have potentially disastrous consequences. Tragically, even former discernment leaders are unwittingly being led astray, attributing Cahn’s nine mystical “seals” or “signs” as new revelation from God.

GARY E. GILLEY

SENIOR PASTOR, SOUTHERN VIEW CHAPEL
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

James has written this book not merely to expose error but to keep God’s people from being led astray. I believe he has accomplished these goals.

PAUL BARRECA

TEACHING PASTOR, FAITH BIBLE CHURCH
VINELAND, NEW JERSEY

This book gives the reader a detailed, point-by-point analysis challenging [*The Harbinger*]. James does this with clear biblical methodology while avoiding personal attacks.

JIMMY DEYOUNG

PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER, PROPHECY TODAY

I commend James’s book, *The Harbinger: Fact or Fiction?*, for those seeking the truth rather than popularity.

BRANNON HOWSE

PRESIDENT & FOUNDER, WORLDVIEW WEEKEND

David James has used true discernment, extensive research, and biblical hermeneutics to reveal the dangerous message of *The Harbinger* [and its] extra-biblical revelation.

ROY B. ZUCK

SENIOR PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF BIBLE
EXPOSITION • DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Anyone interested in *The Harbinger* needs to note [its] numerous errors...as presented in James’s excellent analysis.

TOMMY ICE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PRE-TRIB RESEARCH CENTER

In a fair and balanced way, Dave James exposes...biblical and theological inaccuracies contained in the story created by Jonathan Cahn.

This exclusive new book from The Berean Call, encourages—and enables—readers to separate fact from fiction. The Berean Call, 223 pp.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: David James is the Ministry Coordinator for The Alliance for Biblical Integrity (ABI). Dave’s undergraduate degree is in engineering from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and his masters is in Biblical Studies from Dallas Theological Seminary. He also holds a diploma in Biblical Studies from the Word of Life Bible Institute. He served with Word of Life Fellowship for 21 years, with 16 of those years as the Founding Director of the Word of Life Bible Institute in Hungary. As the Ministry Coordinator for ABI, Dave is responsible for all ministry development, including research

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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 Two

T. A. McMahon

In this two-part series we're considering characteristics of Jesus that are revealed clearly in the Scriptures but that seem to be avoided or dismissed in the church today. As we noted in part one, Jesus presents Himself to John in chapter 1 of Revelation in a highly symbolic way—a way that is far different from the years when Jesus was physically with John and they walked together. John, the beloved of Christ, who seemed to have had a more intimate relationship with His Lord and Savior than the other Apostles, nevertheless is confronted visually by an image of Jesus so overpowering that he can only react by dropping to his face before Him. There is little doubt that John's relationship grew deeper with Jesus after His ascension, as it should with all believers as they mature in the faith. But it seems that even John was not prepared for what he witnessed.

The symbolic image represented a characteristic of Jesus that He wants His church, His bride, those who believe in Him, to understand concerning their relationship with Him. He wants His followers to be pure, to be holy, just as He is pure and holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). That seems to be indicated by His hair and the fiery image of His eyes: "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..." (Revelation 1:14-15). All of these symbolic elements appear to represent judgment. That seems to be underscored by the "twoedged sword" protruding from the mouth of the image of Christ (Revelation 1:16). The sword is His Word, the Scriptures, by which everyone will be judged. He is the Word, and it is His words that will judge and condemn unbelievers. His words will also judge believers in the sense of correcting and pruning so that their lives might conform to the truth and be increasingly fruitful.

We need to be aware that the symbolism surrounding the rather intimidating figure of Christ and His exhortation in the first three chapters of Revelation is not directed at the world, but rather at His bride, His church. These are the ones whom John declares the Groom loves: "Unto him that loved us, and

washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5). Yet any believer who doesn't grasp that Jesus is "getting tough" with His bride is missing a very important aspect of His message to the seven churches, that being—He wants her to "shape up" before the wedding.

It seems to me to be a "prenuptial" exhortation, and a rather frank one at that. But why would Jesus speak to His bride the way He does? It certainly isn't the way young men today go about wooing their brides in order to ensure that they show up at the church. Of course, what seems right to us because of worldly or cultural influences rarely conforms to the teachings of Scripture. Nevertheless, the question remains: why would Jesus "read His bride the riot act," as He seems to be doing in His messages to the seven churches? Let me suggest some possibilities.

First of all, and bottom line, it is for her good. That's a safe conjecture because everything Jesus says and does is good and for the good of those He addresses. Yet there is much more that we can surmise. Although we are to expect the Lord to return from heaven at any time for us His bride, and we can't know the day or the hour, we do know the spiritual condition of the world at that time. It's indicated in the words of Jesus in Luke 18:8: "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" In the Gospel of Matthew, our Lord tells His disciples that the days prior to His return will be characterized by spiritual deception (24:4) that will be terribly seductive: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (v. 24).

Some claim that this verse teaches that the elect are immune to such deception. That view has many problems. Jesus was speaking to His disciples, who were certainly His elect, yet He warned them not to be deceived—which doesn't make sense if they *couldn't* be deceived. Believers have always been subject to deception. Scripture warns us against falling for Satan's "devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11). Furthermore, all of the epistles, which are written to believers, contain corrections of false doctrines that either had seduced them or had that potential. These are all things the Lord knows His bride will face.

Christ's sternness in one way may be compared to a drill sergeant who prepares his raw recruits for warfare. A drill sergeant, no matter what the army, is universally known for his being hard on his men. His approach is no-nonsense because of his concern not only for his troop's survival but also that his soldiers will be victorious in the battles they will face. Similarly, believers in Jesus down through the ages have been subjected to intense spiritual battles. Our Lord's concern is for how they fair in what they are facing. He points out issues to the seven churches (and to us today) that will seriously undermine one's relationship with Him and consequently one's effectiveness for His kingdom. The Ephesians, for example, were commended for many things, but their foundation was being undermined as their active love for the Lord was fading. That may seem insignificant compared to all the good works they were doing, yet it is more critical than we may realize, and simply so. If the love of Christ is not our first and foremost motivation for the works that we do, then what *will* be our motivation, even though we may not be aware of it? Self. And where the leaven of self enters in, the loaf of pride rises, which is the primary recipe for works of the flesh.

The issue is so serious that the Lord declares to His bride, the Ephesians (and again to us as well), that if they do not repent He will "remove their candlestick out of its place" (Revelation 2:5). A candlestick is a light-giving instrument, a symbol that "giveth light unto all that are in the house," and in the passages of Matthew 5:14-15 Jesus called his disciples "the light of the world." They were only that light in the sense that they taught others to "observe all things" that Jesus taught them (Matthew 28:20), i.e., His Word. Peter refers to the Scriptures, which he calls the "word of prophecy," as a "light that shineth in a dark place" (2 Peter 1:19). I believe the action of the removal of the "candlestick" (also referred to as a lampstand) is primarily the drifting away from the light of God's Word as believers' love for Him waxes cold. Furthermore, in John 8:12, Jesus, who is the Living Word, referred to Himself as "the light of the world." Isaiah, as well, shows clearly the relationship of light and the Scriptures: "...if they speak not according to [God's] word, it is because there is no light in them" (8:20).

As we noted in part one of these articles, the seven churches of Revelation were not only specific churches functioning at the time when John wrote the book, but they are also reflective of what the church in general experienced at certain times throughout its history. Moreover, the issues that Christ addresses can be found in local churches throughout the world today. So, as we are repeatedly urged, we need to heed what Jesus said to the historic churches and apply that to our local churches and to ourselves as individual believers—His bride—today.

To two of the seven churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia, Jesus offers no correction. They are only shown comfort and encouragement because of what they have suffered and will suffer for their steadfastness in the faith. There are multitudes of fellowships undergoing similar persecution for their witness for Christ today and many more that perhaps will be subject to the same in the future. Christ's words, therefore, as they are heeded, will strengthen and give heart to His bride not only to endure what's ahead but to be victorious and fruitful in the midst of it.

The Groom's address to the other five churches consists mainly of a list of issues that will create major spiritual problems for His bride—problems that will seriously affect a believer's relationship with Him and one's fruitfulness for His kingdom. To underscore what is central to correcting the churches that have drifted away from His Word, our Lord repeats the symbol for the Word that He first identified Himself with in addressing the church in Pergamos: "These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges" (2:12). That is not only central, but it is the *only* basis for the necessary discernment the bride must have in order to recognize deception and repent of the erroneous spiritual practices she has gotten into or may yet face.

The church at Pergamos had problems that were hardly unique to that fellowship. Some of its members were teaching false doctrine, likely for material gain, and were fostering sexual immorality. The church had those who held to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which no doubt involved some form of elevating the leaders to a higher spiritual level and control over laity, that is, the brothers and sisters of that fellowship. This is apparent today in churches where there is a hierarchy and a distinct clergy class. Jesus declares that He *hates* that, and He will deal directly with it through His Word if the fellowship does not repent.

Christ speaks to the church of Thyatira in terms that clearly indicate judgment, reiterating the earlier symbols that represent the

same: "These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass" (2:18). That church has a woman, a false prophetess, who has introduced sexual immorality, spiritual fornication, and practices related to idolatry. In His mercy and longsuffering, He has given her time to repent. In His concern for this fellowship of believers, He uses His most sobering and sternest words: "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give every one of you according to your works" (2:22-23). If the Lord's words seem shocking to some of us, it may be because we've been so mesmerized by our politically, socially, religiously, and psychologically "correct thinking" that we've become blinded to the many strong deterrents (e.g., Ananias and Sapphira) found throughout the Bible. Furthermore, we may have lost sight of the fact that He is speaking as the One who *loves* those whom He is addressing and has washed them from their sins in his own blood (Revelation 1:5).

To the church at Sardis, which has only a remnant of steadfast believers, He gives exhortation to "be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain" (3:2) and to remember what they have "received and heard, and hold fast, and repent." If they will not watch, our Lord declares that He will "come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (3:3). I believe this is a visit for corrective judgment of His church, His bride. This is what Peter prophetically confirms: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17).

The Groom has gentler words for the bride at Philadelphia, a fellowship of "little strength" yet they have "kept [Christ's] word, and [have] not denied [His] name" (3:8). He declares His love for them and praises them for living out His Word in patient perseverance. Nevertheless, they are warned to "hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (3:10-11). It seems that the Groom not only will have His bride "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white" (19:8) because of his imputed righteousness, but He also wants her to be adorned with crowns earned by her loving obedience to His Word.

Many have suggested that the church of the Laodiceans is the church most representative of the churches of our day, particularly churches in the West. One definition I found for the word Laodicea is "rule of the

people"; another was "judgment of the people." Both seem to be appropriate to Christ's admonitions, in that the people are doing their own thing and He is outside their fellowship. They seem to be so self-absorbed in their materialistic self-sufficiency that they cannot recognize that they are spiritually "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (3:17). How does the Bridegroom address this condition? In the strongest language yet! Regarding those whom He characterizes as "lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot," He declares, "I will spue thee out of my mouth" (3:15-16).

Here we must ask again: why would the Lord speak to His bride in such a way?

In the last passages of Revelation 3, He spells out the reasons quite clearly for what I've referred to as His "prenuptial exhortation" to the seven churches. In verse 19 He declares, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

He *loves* the bride, and He counsels her to receive from Him things that have been purified and will purify her life and love for Him—spiritual "gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see" (3:18).

He concludes His exhortation to His bride, to us who profess to believe in Him, who claim to follow Him, with an offer that implies a reality check, a check of our relationship with Him as the One to whom we are betrothed. Has our love for Him become "lukewarm"? Or have we drifted away from our first love for Him? Whatever our condition may be, He urges and encourages us, "Be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (3:19-20).

The Bridegroom is willing...but what about the bride? Whatever instruction we find in the Word of God, we are to take heed. But when we find in Scripture something repeated, such as Jesus saying, "Verily, verily..." it seems that He is making His instruction very emphatic. What then of His instructions to His bride, which He emphasizes with an exhortation that He repeats seven times? "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."—Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17). **TBC**

Quotable

Do you tell the Lord about everything in your life that concerns you? Do you expect Him to be interested in what might be the small and relatively unimportant details? He wants you to bring everything to Him, and it is His answers in the small things that makes us appreciate His intimate nearness and faithfulness.

— Brian Russell
Choice Gleanings 2011

Q&A

QUESTION: Has anyone written anything about the secular acquisitions [of Christian companies] and the impact this has on Christian publishing? Why would Christians allow this to happen in the first place?

RESPONSE: These once solid Christian publishers are in the hands of individuals who have lost the vision of the founders. Paul tells us that “the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith... (1 Tm 6:10). Enticed by the offered purchase price, the company is sold. Rupert Murdoch and other secular publishers have recognized the potential for profit in “Christian” materials.

The dangers associated with such takeovers are clear. “There is something going on there that is saying we need to turn a greater profit at a risk of compromising our beliefs as Christians,” said John Thompson, vice president of marketing for Broadman & Holman Publishing, an arm of the Southern Baptist Convention. HarperCollins, he noted, also publishes books offensive to evangelicals, such as *The New Joy of Gay Sex* (Kirkpatrick, “Evangelical Sales Are Converting Publishers,” *New York Times*, Arts, 6/8/02). Rupert Murdoch recently acquired Thomas Nelson (TN) publishers, who in 2006 had printed the book *Hot Moms* under the TN imprint, Naked Ink (See *TBC Extra*, www.thebereancall.org/node/2779 for a brief history on TN Publishers).

TN and other publishers had already begun offering less-than-biblical materials. A Christian literary agent wrote positively of how TN had published “...Christianity lite versions of material presented on Moody’s Radio Network by the Minirth/Meier team” (<http://stobbeliterary.com/the-myth-about-crossover-books.html>). We have addressed the psychoheresy of the now defunct partnership of Minirth/Meier in past issues of the newsletter (see May 1995 *TBC*).

Christian writer Jim Fletcher noted in a 2009 article, “In the 1990s...there was a shift in philosophy. Publishers, stores, and distributors began to realize the vast

potential for making money....To appeal to the broadest possible audience, works began to creep in that were decidedly not aligned with the Bible” (<http://www.lighthouse-trailsresearch.com/blog/?m=20090801>).

Although some good materials are still being published, there is a growing list of unbiblical materials, such as Blomberg and Robinson’s *How Wide the Divide*, published by InterVarsity Press. The authors (a Mormon and an evangelical), seek to find “commonalities” between the two faiths.

Paul warned, “For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him” (2 Corinthians 11:4).

For biblical believers, it should be well known that Mormons clearly taught and teach “another Jesus.” Perhaps the most horrendous claim still held by Mormons is that Jesus was the “spirit brother” of Lucifer. The late President Spencer W. Kimball stated: “Long before you were born a program was developed by your creators....The principal personalities in this great drama were a Father Elohim, perfect in wisdom, judgment, and person, and two sons, Lucifer and Jehovah [Jesus]” (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 32-33). One of the LDS General Authorities, Milton R. Hunter taught, “The appointment of Jesus to be Savior of the world was contested by one of the other sons of God. He was called Lucifer...this spirit-brother of Jesus desperately tried to become the Savior of mankind” (*The Gospel Through the Ages*, p.15, 1945, see also *Mormon Doctrine*, pp.192, 546-47, 589-90 and *Gospel Principles*, p.15-16).

As far back as 1985, InterVarsity Press published the booklet *One Catholic to Another* by Peter Kreeft. The booklet is written in the form of a fictional conversation between Catholics:

Dusty: Why do you go [to Mass], Sonny?

Sonny: Jesus is there.

Dusty: How is he there?

Sonny: He’s really present in the Eucharist and he’s really present in his people. They’re both called the body of Christ, you know.” (p. 8)

In conclusion, though the effect of secular ownership hasn’t fully been felt, there already has been a growing compromise among some Christian publishers. In 1 Corinthians 9:22, Paul wrote, “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” His becoming “all things to all men” never compromised the essentials of the gospel. Rather, in becoming “like” either Jews or Gentiles, he did this “for the gospel’s sake” (v. 23).

QUESTION: “What can you tell us about the upcoming “America for Jesus” rally taking place in Philadelphia Sept 28&29? The leadership calls for a “solemn assembly” based on 2 Chronicles 7:14. Is there any hope for America based on this promise, and is there any practical benefit to participating in such national rallies?

RESPONSE: Anne Gimenez of The Rock Church is the national chairman of this rally, originally launched by her late husband, John Gimenez, on April 29, 1980, with participants including Pat Robertson, Jim Bakker, Bill Bright, and Jerry Falwell.

Even political commentators have noted that “the prominent role of New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) leaders in the event reveals just how much the Religious Right has changed and grown even more extreme, as leaders now not only claim that they have a divine mandate to change politics but also that they are actual apostles and prophets with the same divine appointment as the apostles and prophets of the Bible and receive direct prophecies from God” (Brian Tashman, “Washington for Jesus Returns as the ‘America for Jesus’ Prayer Rally in Philadelphia,” *Right Wing Watch*, 02/21/2012).

Other speakers include Lou Engle of the International House of Prayer (IHOP). In the May 1990 issue of this newsletter Dave warned: “This ‘Latter Rain’ movement is growing with astonishing speed in association with the Vineyards and Kansas City Fellowship under the influence of ‘prophets’ such as John Wimber, Paul Cain (former associate of William Branham), Rick Joyner, Mike Bickle and others. Increasing numbers of churches are ‘submitting’ themselves to these ‘prophets’ in what appears to be a rapidly growing new discipleship movement based upon ‘signs and wonders,’ which is *bringing dangerous heresies into the church in the name of holiness and unity* [emphasis added].”

Also manifested in a group known as the Kansas City Prophets, this 1940s Latter Rain movement was declared a heresy by mainline Pentecostals (among others) and lost momentum for many years. Unfortunately, it seems you can’t keep a heretical idea down, and various aspects of it have surfaced again. The happenings at Toronto and Pensacola (Brownsville Revival) and various spots around the world are simply manifestations of these same ideas, with the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) contributing the continuation of these unbiblical teachings.

Word faith teachers such as Kenneth Copeland and Gordon Robertson of the *700 Club* have also endorsed the event as these separate movements draw closer together in their goals and objectives (See May 2006 *TBC*).



IN DEFENSE *of the* FAITH

BIBLICAL ANSWERS *to* CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

Is Faith a Power of the Mind?

QUESTION: One of my favorite books has been *The Power of Positive Thinking*. In it, the author says that “positive thinking” is just another word for “faith.” I notice that his chief disciple says much the same thing: that “faith” is what he calls “possibility thinking.” He has called Jesus Christ “the greatest possibility thinker of all time.” Something about that bothers me, but I don’t know why. Can you explain?

RESPONSE: We have already noted that Jesus said, “Have faith in God” (Mark 11:22), and that faith can only be in God because He alone is worthy of complete trust. Yet an atheist can teach “Positive Thinking” seminars, and many atheists do so. Obviously, then, positive thinking has nothing to do with faith. It is, in fact, the exact opposite of faith.

The theory of positive thinking is that one’s thoughts, whether “positive” or “negative,” influence one’s own body and personality and thus health. Moreover, one’s thoughts are believed even to influence other people and the world around. Thus success or failure is allegedly created by the power of one’s mind. This is actually an ancient occult belief, which its modern proponents claim works through some mysterious psychic power that we all possess but have to learn to use.

Faith, on the other hand, is placed in God and His omnipotence, not in the alleged power of one’s own mind, whether conscious or unconscious. What a difference! For positive thinking, it doesn’t matter whether God is real or not; what matters is one’s *belief*. Thus, “God” is turned into a placebo that activates belief. One could believe in some cosmic energy source or anything else. All that matters is simply that one *believes*. It is the power of belief that supposedly causes the desired effect. What triggers this *belief* is unimportant. Clearly, then, whoever confuses positive/possibility thinking with faith has turned from God and His truth and power and has been badly deceived in both temporal and eternal issues.

An Inescapable and Vital Choice

Here is the choice we face: Either we trust in the power of a firmly held belief activating some mysterious psychic power of the mind, or else we trust in God and His infinite power, which is obviously demonstrated everywhere in the universe. Only a fool would choose the power of the mind over the power of God. True faith looks to God to do that which neither one’s mind (conscious or unconscious) nor talents nor efforts could accomplish.

An important element of faith, therefore, is *submission to God’s will*. Faith could hardly be expected to believe that God would do what is contrary to His will, nor would faith desire

Him to do so. Faith trusts God to fulfill His Word and to effect His will in one’s life.

Here is another error: Many religious people try to use “faith” to cause God to put *their* will into effect. Many people think of prayer as a religious technique for getting their own way. They set their sights on what they want and then use prayer as a means of trying to talk God into making it work out for them. And if someone comes along offering a seminar on techniques for getting prayers “answered” (such as visualizing what one is praying for, or speaking forth with confidence that one has already obtained what one is praying for, etc.), people will sign up by the millions to learn how to get their own way.

By His example, Jesus made it clear that no one has even begun to pray until he can first say from his heart to God, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). Paul exemplified the same truth. He had an affliction that he referred to as his “thorn in the flesh” and from which he asked Christ to deliver him:

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities [weaknesses], that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:8–9)

No one can have faith in God—that is, absolute and total trust in Him—without knowing Him. And if one truly knows God, then one sincerely wants God’s will rather than one’s own will. Obviously, God is wiser than any mere human. Furthermore, He has proved that He loves us. Then doesn’t it make sense, rather than trying to get one’s own finite and fallible will to be done, to trust God’s infinite wisdom and love to effect what is best in one’s life? That is true “faith in God.” Nothing else makes sense.

TBC NewsWatch

CHRISTIANS MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN JOB AND FAITH

[HTTP://WWW.DAILYMAIL.CO.UK/NEWS/ARTICLE-2198201/CHRISTIANS-CHOOSE-JOB-FAITH-GOVERNMENT-LAWYERS-CLAIM-EUROPEAN-COURT.HTML#IXZZ26BSvLPb6](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/Article-2198201/Christians-choose-job-faith-government-lawyers-claim-European-court.html#ixzz26BSvLPb6), **CHRISTIANS ‘MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN JOB OR THEIR FAITH’: GOVERNMENT LAWYERS CLAIM AT EUROPEAN COURT [EXCERPTS]**—Christians may have to sacrifice their jobs if they want to express their religion at work, government lawyers declared.

The hearing at the European Court of Human Rights involved four test cases: Nadia Eweida’s row with British Airways led the airline to back down in 2006 and Shirley Chaplin who—after 30 years as a nurse—was told she could no longer wear her cross on duty for health and safety reasons. The other two cases are those of Lilian Ladele, who was sacked as a registrar by Islington council because she declined to conduct civil partnerships and Gary McFarlane, a Relate counsellor who lost his job in Bristol after admitting to bosses that he felt unable to give sex therapy to gays.

Paul Diamond, for Mrs. Chaplin and Mr. McFarlane, said: “These are real people, real lives, real damage suffered. There is no knowing where this will end as society moves in a secular direction.”

But James Eadie QC, acting for the Government, told the judges that none of the four Christians had suffered any form of discrimination. “Everyone has the right to express their beliefs, including the right to display religious symbols, but not an absolute right or a right without limits. That does not mean that in their professional sphere anyone can manifest their religious belief in any way they choose.” He said that under European human rights rules, people were allowed to practise their religion in a “generally recognised form.”

However, they could not ask to express their religion in ways which were not a “scriptural requirement.”

He said: “Employees are free to resign if they find their employment incompatible with their religious beliefs,” adding: “They can obtain alternative employment in which they can reflect their religion as they wish.”

HE GAVE US WHAT WE WANTED

[HTTP://WWW.BREAKPOINT.ORG/FEATURES-COLUMNS/BREAKPOINT-COLUMNS/ENTRY/2/20123](http://www.breakpoint.org/features-columns/breakpoint-columns/entry/2/20123), **TOM GILSON, “HE GAVE US WHAT WE WANTED” [EXCERPTS]**—David Barton was American evangelicals’

favorite historian. He taught us about the Founding Fathers’ almost uniform commitment to Christian principles, and secular historians’ attempts to bury our Christian heritage under reams of revisionist distortions. He gave us firepower in support of our mission to return America to its godly founding principles.

He gave us what we wanted. But now David Barton has been credibly charged with serious distortions of his own.

The story has been told in both the secular and the Christian press: Barton’s most recent book, *The Jefferson Lies*, was riddled with misinformation. Its publisher, Thomas Nelson, pulled it from distribution. Barton is standing firm in his position, but reliable historians—strongly conservative Christian scholars among them—continue to hold him in error.

I am no historian....Few of us are. But that doesn’t excuse our eager acceptance of his inaccuracies. With a bit of care, any of us could have known of the serious questions that have surrounded Barton’s work for a long time. These recent revelations are nothing new, except in the degree to which conservative Christian scholars are involved in calling him to account.

Nevertheless we became for him a devoted cadre of disciples. We knew our country’s founding principles were vitally important. However, so is historical accuracy. It looks as if Barton compromised one to make a case for the other.

Barton fended off criticism by blaming it on the liberal academy’s antipathy to Christianity. That had more than a little believability to it. I am quite sure that liberal academics often hold to an ideological agenda that motivates them to discredit Christianity’s part in our nation’s history.

Followers of Jesus Christ have no need to invent realities. What we can know of God through Scripture and through life in Christ is really true, and it’s sufficient to carry us through all the other unknowns of life.

Still, we are human. There is a common human need to know, and to know that we know. Sometimes we overdo it, to the extent that we “know” things that aren’t so. This is a human tendency, and of course I am not only speaking of Christians but also of skeptics who insist just as positively that we arrived here by way of evolution.

“Skeptic” is one of their favorite words, by the way: They claim never to believe anything on anything less than solid evidence. They would never overrun the facts on the way to certainty. Except that (speaking of facts) they don’t practice their skepticism at all consistently. *Skeptical* magazine,

for example, reported favorably on a thoroughly discredited “research” study purporting to show that the most secular countries in the world were the best ones to live in—even after the journal that published the study followed it up with a retraction. So much for making sure of their facts.

We Christians ought to be the ones most comfortable with facts. We follow the One who is the Truth. Our commitment to truth extends to every domain of life. Sometimes the truest thing we can say is “I don’t know.”

[TBC: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).]

IRANIAN PASTOR ACQUITTED OF APOSTASY

LILLIAN KWON, “IRAN PASTOR YUCEF NADARKHANI ACQUITTED OF APOSTASY, RELEASED FROM JAIL,” CHRISTIAN POST, 9/8/12 [EXCERPTS]—Yucef Nadarkhani, the Iranian pastor who captured the hearts of millions as he stood firm in his faith while facing execution, has been acquitted of apostasy.

Two organizations that have closely been monitoring the case and have sources in Iran reported Saturday that Nadarkhani, who went on trial early Saturday, has been released from prison and is at home with his family.

Though acquitted of apostasy, the Iranian pastor was found guilty of evangelizing Muslims. He was sentenced to three years imprisonment but was released because he already served this time.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide also confirmed the pastor’s release.

“We commend the Iranian judiciary for this step, which is a triumph for justice and the rule of law,” said CSW Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas. “While we rejoice at this wonderful news, we do not forget hundreds of others who are harassed or unjustly detained on account of their faith, and CSW is committed to continue campaigning until all of Iran’s religious minorities are able to enjoy religious freedom as guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is party.”

Nadarkhani, pastor in a network of house churches, was arrested on Oct. 13, 2009, after protesting the government’s decision to force all children, including his own Christian children, to read the Quran.

T. A.'s Speaking Schedule

Oct 13	Simple Truths Conference Pasadena, CA 626-584-9992
Oct 14	Evangelistic Center Church Oxnard, CA (805) 483-2482
Dec 3-5	21st Annual Pre-Trib Study Group Dallas/Ft Worth, TX 800-962-1022
Jan 17-19	Calvary Chapel Finger Lakes Farmington, NY (585) 398-3550

Letters

Dear Friends,

To my surprise, a fellow inmate gave me three years' worth of newsletters from you—he is leaving and thought I might be able to use them. He was right! I am an inmate and run an apologetics class. The prison that I am at allows certain classes as long as they help. It's the only one to do so, and praise God for them! I often remind the inmates to respect the staff and not to complain, and it's working! JP (AZ, prisoner)

Dear T. A.,

I had purchased that book [*The Harbinger*] and as I read it I felt that it was strange. I'm glad you wrote about it because it answered my questions. Thank you so for your faithfulness. LK (MN)

Dave Hunt,

In token of the uninterrupted Christian Tradition, it would be well to inform you that the Catholic Church made the Bible and determined what books would go into the Bible. The Bible is a Catholic Document that was, unfortunately, pillaged and plundered by the protestant community as a vestige from the Church. The Church is the Authentic Interpreter and Guardian of Scripture. Additionally, it is on the trust that the protestant confessions have in the Church's Infallibility and authority that you accept the scriptures (which you reduced and corrupted) as inspired. The self-appointed "ministers" of the Protestants are well known for their disagreements, contradictions, and disunity. This is the fruit of private interpretation, for private interpretation is interpreting scripture in whatever way...the imagination or personal convenience may dictate.

The condition of those bodies, which at the time of the Revolt forsook the Church, affords us an object lesson in point. Divided into various sections and parties, they were the scene of never-ending disputes; and by

the nature of the case they are cut off from all hope of attaining to certainty. Protestantism is ever a prey of party disputes, dissensions, and rivalries. There are over 50,000+ denominations in the Protestant false religion and each disagrees with the other on the most fundamental points of doctrine. They cannot agree and keep dividing and subdividing by the year. Their only similarity appears to be their opposition to the Church. Today the divisions and subdivisions of Protestantism are too well known to need comment.... Protestantism is a man made religion that is hopelessly inconsistent and illegitimate in nature.... There is absolutely No Salvation Outside of the Catholic Church: Protestants are Heretics. MW (email)

Dear Dave,

Thank you for your obedience to the Lord in getting the TRUTH out to us in these evil last days. It is such an encouragement. The "Emerging Church"—where is it emerging from? Certainly not from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Quite the opposite! CB (MA)

Dear T. A.,

I just finished the [July] issue of *The Berean Call*. Wonderful! The explanation about Catholic beliefs was succinct and very helpful. I just wonder about readers who take TBC to task over its critique of fictional materials. If we were all reading the Scriptures, instead of [these] offerings... there wouldn't be anything to argue over, would there? I do so appreciate and thank TBC...for your wise counsel, which is based solely on the Word of God. CS (email)

T. A.,

RE: "Roman Catholics: The Neighborhood Mission Field." As one saved out of Catholicism in 1981, all I can say is "Amen!" Only by God's grace did I realize the RC was not the answer.... In a small Bible church in southern New Jersey I heard the gospel for the first time.... Convicted of my sin, I was born again, and, like you, I have a heart for those enslaved by Rome. KS (email)

Dear Mr. Hunt,

I just want to thank you so much for your book, *What Love Is This*? I recently ordered it because although I have been a believer for over forty years, I have recently been hearing more and more Christians justifying all sorts of tragedies and consequences of sin as examples of "God's sovereignty." In addition, on a recent trip to a women's retreat, a Christian sister started a discussion with me, then when I disagreed with her beliefs on limited salvation, [she] accused me of being

an Arminian! Although I assured her that I didn't even know what he believed and that my beliefs were based on scriptures such as John 3:16, I decided I'd better learn more about Calvinism. I am especially shocked that the Southern Baptists are starting to embrace this doctrine and push it! I wonder how many know about early Calvinist persecutions of their own beliefs? I'm afraid that so many have their beliefs based on teachers rather than on the word of God itself. Thank you for such a well-researched book that will help me...my husband...and my college-age daughters to better defend the true character of God. RB (email)

Dear Dave and Tom,

I have taken up Dave's admonition and what the Holy Spirit revealed about what I must do to be right with the Lord Jesus. I am taking up my cross and following after Jesus! I am also taking the Apostle Paul's advice and seeing about "glorying in my infirmities." I used to gripe and complain about my lot in my Christian life but I will praise the Lord and remember Romans 8:28 from now on! PW (FL)

Dear Dave and staff,

Your newsletter is always a blessing to us. The modern churches seem to be [falling] more and more into apostasy. We have now here in Puerto Rico, a man who was a pastor and now is saying that he is Christ in the flesh who came for the second time and there is no more sin and Satan does not exist anymore!! You are alerting the church of Christ constantly to focus on God's Word and Jesus, our source of all truth. L&IF (PR)

TBC,

[Regarding the NewsWatch article about children being a distraction.] Parents who allow their children to be disruptive are the ones who need to be chastised for being so selfish and inconsiderate toward the members of the congregation who are there for the right reasons, as well as new people who are earnestly seeking to join a body of believers who are walking with the Lord. These selfish, overly indulgent parents should consider a playground on Sunday mornings instead.

Second, regarding your relentless assault of Jonathan Cahn, I wonder what your real agenda is here. I didn't see anywhere near this much vitriol when that garbage called *The Shack* came out. Shame on you and your arrogance. RE (email)

Dear Mr. McMahon,

Mr. Cahn boasts of the selling of his book and the wide support from Christian leaders to it. To that I say that selling of any book means nothing about its quality, truth,

or similar; the serial of Harry Potter (the magician boy) has sold a lot too....

Any book that enhances the dear and long-held belief regarding the founding fathers will always be bought, and promoted, by many U.S. Christians....

If many readers have called *The Harbinger* the best book they ever read outside of the Bible, as Mr. Cahn claims, it is because they have not read good spiritual Christian authors, such as Bounds, Murray, Tozer, and others, so they are thrilled with this new appealing best-selling one. It is understandable that U.S. Christians, who see their flag from birth to burial, make a pledge to it [from] childhood, and hear/sing the national anthem often...tend to love the nationalistic ideas displayed in *The Harbinger*. So, people who are against that book may be called jealous, judgmental, unloving and even anti-American. Anyway, Fil. [Phil.] 3:20 says that our...citizenship is in Heaven, that is, not a country of this world. Since the prince of this world (nations) is the Devil, sooner or later there are certain clashes between the interests of both citizenships....

Recently I saw a documentary on one Spanish TV channel about Washington, D.C. It said: "following masonic rites on October 13th, 1792, George Washington set the first stone of the White House, but he never lived in it"; "in the town (one called Alexandria) is the George Washington Masonic National Memorial...with a big statue of him inside.... In the paintings (inside) are shown the masonic rituals celebrated when the first stone of the Capitolio was set"; (French general) "La Fayette gave to George Washington the key which opened the Bastille" (in Paris, which capture is considered the trigger of the French masonic-inspired revolution).

Apart from this documentary, several monuments in Washington, D.C., and history books point out the masonic belief of Mr. Washington and other founding fathers. If some people, even so, want to keep believing in the delusion of Christian founding fathers who wanted to found a Christian nation, it is up to them. I know it is hard to change a dear belief, especially if it is spiritually related, after being held as a dear truth for very long, but we should embrace truth, no matter how hard it is. AM (email)

Greetings to all Berean Call Staff,

My life truly was blessed with the very first newsletter that I received in September 1996. As a new believer (January 1996) all I wanted was to know God—the God who lives in Heaven! That was in my heart daily as I called out to God, "LORD, I want to know You," while praying the scriptures....

God's word became stored in my heart...

but I also needed guidance and direction—not to be misled by false teaching....As I steadfastly prayed God's word—believing—He led me to one of Dave Hunt's books—*A Woman Rides the Beast*. Stated inside the front cover: a FREE monthly newsletter available upon request. That was my answer! I jumped on it! God does hear prayer! The monthly newsletter and the many books by Dave and others and Tom's writings—guided me—to the Word of God.... O, Blessed be God, my Savior! TS (IL)

Dear T. A. and Dave,

The article, "Are We Too Negative?" (TBC, August 2012) was so convicting on the vital need in the church today for Christians to discern the false, pseudo-Christian teachings being promoted as biblical that I was prepared to thank T. A. for writing the article. I then realized Dave wrote it 21 years ago and that it's even more applicable today than it was then. Thanks, Dave, for your timeless wisdom and teaching for the church of Jesus Christ all these years. OF (CA)

Dear Mr. Hunt and Mr. McMahon,

Thank you for your unfailing faithfulness in holding true to and proclaiming the Word of God without compromise. I know it doesn't bring you great popularity in this era of compromising Christianity, but there are many of us who are truly thankful for you and others like you. Thank you for not shying away from using your God-given gift of discernment to warn and to bless the body of Christ. If it weren't for men like you I don't know what kind of stupid tangent I would have been lured into in this day of tremendous spiritual deception and apostasy.... You may take a lot of flack for it here and now, but great will be your reward in heaven.

I pray for you, your families, and the ministry of TBC and all who are involved with it. Please be encouraged to keep on keeping on. With so much deception in the church, often so beautifully packaged and endorsed by the biggest names in Christianity, it takes a great deal of vigilance and discernment to stay on top of it all. It would be almost impossible for each individual to do all the research that would be required to be properly informed about all these things. So we in the body of Christ who sincerely desire to be true to our Lord, and not to be misled, really need ministries like yours, and I, for one, give thanks for you always. AP (Canada)

Dearest Dave and T. A.,

I pray for God's blessings on you both.

T. A., I have just finished watching [Caryl Matrisciana's video] *Wide Is the Gate*, volume 1. This is one of the most important,

definitive resources for Christian leaders, Bible teachers, pastors, etc., that I have ever seen.... I plan to give as many of these away as possible, both volumes 1 and 2.

I received my copies of *Cosmos, Creator, and Human Destiny* and will get those into the hands of my pastor, our church library, and to another young earth creation ministry.

I have been amazed in the past year at the powerful—really powerful—resources coming out of so many ministries.... I will never be able to fathom the depth of God's mercy and long-suffering for us, but it does seem that some sort of boundary has been crossed, and as the world becomes more and more perverse, God's message is becoming more and more powerful.

I do pray for you both, your families, and the ministry God has given you. GH (AZ)

TBC Notes

GREAT (time of ministry in) BRITAIN

By the grace of our Lord I had a wonderful time of preaching and teaching in England and Wales. Arriving just after the Olympics ended, I spoke at numerous fellowships, from Saltburn and Manchester in the north to Dartmoor and Southampton in the south, finishing in London before returning home. I was thrilled to minister to 170 (mostly young adults) at Truth 4 Youth in the moors of Devon. They were an enthusiastic audience for the Word of God as taught by my friends Carl Kerby, Paul Wilkinson, and Tim Palmer.

Although Dave Hunt has retired from ministry, his legacy continues to bless people around the world. Folks drove multiple hours in many cases because of their love for Dave and the ministry; I'm very thankful for the opportunities to represent him and The Berean Call. Please pray especially that God will enable us at TBC to reach the upcoming generation with the writings and teachings that the Lord has graced Dave to produce in his many years of fruitful ministry.

T. A. McMAHON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A SHOCKING LACK OF DISCERNMENT:

PROMOTING THE HERESIES OF HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG ——— BY EDWIN NEWBY

WE have no reason to doubt that we live in challenging times. Nor can we deny that our Sovereign Creator and Lord will weigh all nations and individuals in His holy balance. According to Philippians 3:20, "...our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Even though our citizenship is in heaven, we recognize the commission given by God to the church to preach the gospel (Mt 28:19-20, Mk 16:15, Lk 24:47, Jn 20:21, Acts 1:8). There is no other hope to be found in this world.

It should be of great concern to us to see how too many have uncritically joined with false teachers simply because they are saying "good things." Christians are joining with cultists in order to preserve their temporal life in this temporal world. There are biblical issues for which Christians must stand, regardless of the cost. We have the assurance of Scripture that "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps 34:7).

Knowing this promise, why are so many willing to camp with the enemies of the gospel? After the publication of our article addressing *The Harbinger*, critics asked us, "Aren't you concerned for the preservation of this nation?" Is that to be our motivation?

If "success," rather than the Lord himself, becomes our object, we put ourselves in a position in which we could embrace anyone or anything that seems to provide a solution. The Lord inspired Paul to write, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col 3:2-3).

Some view *The Harbinger* as America's last chance. If the preservation of our material life becomes our focus, it doesn't matter whether the message is scriptural, or whether it is accurate in its presentation of history, or whether it has been tested (1 Thes 5:21). When we and others have raised these very proper questions regarding *The Harbinger*, instead of receiving a biblical response, we are confronted with sarcasm, such as: "The hypercritical...modern-day pharisees, [claim that] Cahn's hermeneutics aren't quite right. He hasn't fully dotted every 'i' and crossed every 't.'"

The Lord has called us to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tm 2:15). The failure of believers to exercise biblical discernment becomes even more disappointing when we see those who have been active in apologetics now promoting unscriptural materials. The desire to preserve this life has brought Christians together with those who deny the truth of the gospel. These believers are indeed camping with the enemy.

For example, Joseph Farah and *WorldNetDaily* (WND) have done much good work in the past, and their *Whistleblower* magazine has been a helpful resource. Nevertheless, in recent years, we've noticed their promotion of certain authors who present unbiblical teachings. More than 20 of Michael Rood's DVDs have been featured in WND's catalogs. Rood's training and "ordination" come through The Way International cult founded by Victor Paul Wierwille, who denied the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rood's "Creator's Calendar" is also offered by WND. Rood first published his zodiac-based calendar in 1998 with the assistance of The Way International alumni Robert Scott Wadsworth and Richard Fike. Though supposedly the result of "turning to the Hebrew Scriptures," Rood, Wadsworth, and Fike's calendar has more in common with the zodiac than with Scripture. He also teaches that the idea of the "Trinity" is pagan in origin.

Rood's influence also goes beyond WND. In his December 2004 newsletter, Michael Rood reported on the success of his *Mystery of Iniquity* and *The Pagan-Christian Connection Exposed* in Christian outlets. Regarding his book, he reports, "...my new book, *The Pagan-Christian Connection Exposed*, is in hundreds of Christian and secular book stores all over America, and...international book stores are

reordering it by the cases" (see also, <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2004/12/prweb191067.htm>Biblical).

While Rood may be blatant, WND's executive news editor Joe Kovacs is more subtle. Kovacs calls himself a "Bible believing Christian" and attends a non-denominational church. His books *Shocked by the Bible* and *The Divine Secret* are sold not only by WND but also by many of the splinter groups from The Worldwide Church of God who still follow the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong.

This is not surprising, for many of Kovacs's theological positions line up with those of the late cultist Armstrong. For example, Kovacs's theology of the Godhead parallels that of Armstrong's polytheist view of a family of gods. In *The Divine Secret*, Kovacs writes, "Yes, God is indeed a family. Jesus is the Word and He's one member of the God family, and God the Father is yet another member of that same God family" (Kovacs, *The Divine Secret*, 24).

Armstrong wrote: "The sole value of human life lies in the human spirit and the potential of being begotten of God, later to be born VERY GOD, a child in the GOD FAMILY" (Herbert W. Armstrong, *Mystery of the Ages*, Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1985, 92). Implicit in this statement is the idea that men will become gods. Kovacs may soften this position slightly, but his theology goes in the same direction: "...we will...be born into the spirit world, not composed of flesh and blood anymore, but looking like yourself, composed of spirit just like God the Father and Jesus are composed of spirit, and be members of the actual Family of God.... This is exactly what the Bible says and it calls us the children of God. God is having children. God is reproducing Himself after the God kind" (<http://www.wnd.com/2009/12/118220/>).

An offshoot of Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God interviewed Kovacs in their publication *The Journal*. From his comments, it is clear that he believes we shall become divine, again paralleling the teaching of Armstrong.

THE JOURNAL: ...a minority of Christians in the COG movement are so-called unitarians. They believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the sinless sacrifice, but they believe He is not God and not the Creator. Does that belief, if accurate, negate the plan of God as you see it?

Mr. Kovacs: The plan of God is that God is reproducing. He's having children and raising them to be in the family of God. We are called *children of God* all throughout the New Testament, sons of God. God is having many sons and daughters.

Think for a minute: What are the sons of a giraffe? They're giraffes. What are the children of cats? They're cats. What are the children of God? They're Gods. They're going to be in the God family. (Kovacs, "Children of a giraffe are giraffes, so what are the children of God," *The Journal*, Issue No. 150, 7/27/12)

The lie that brought about the fall of man was "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gn 3:5). In sharp contrast to this heresy, the God of the Bible declares, "that ye may know and believe me, and understand that *I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me* [emphasis added]" (Is 43:10).

Kovacs denies the biblical teaching of the resurrection by theorizing that we are resurrected as spirit beings. In this, he parallels the thoughts of Herbert W. Armstrong, who wrote, "All true Christians [who died] before Christ's coming shall rise first—in a resurrection—and then all Christians still alive, in mortal flesh, shall be instantaneously—in the twinkling of an eye—changed from mortal to immortal—from material flesh to immaterial spirit...exactly like Jesus in His glorified body" (Armstrong, *Just What Do You Mean, Born Again?* 13-15).

Regardless of what Kovacs or Armstrong believe, the Lord Jesus Christ rose “physically from the grave” (“Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have”—Luke 24:39). Kovacs states, “All through the Bible it talks about the glorious divine destiny. We’re not going to be made up of flesh and blood anymore. We’re going to be made up of spirit, because flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God” (Kovacs, *Ibid.*).

Kovacs claims to set Christians straight on the Scriptures but misses much himself. As we already noted, the Lord Jesus very explicitly stated, “a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” First Corinthians 15 uses the terms “spiritual” vs. “natural.” It’s a mistake to believe that “natural” is a synonym for “physical,” with the implication being that “spiritual” is not. Yet, the Lord Jesus Christ rose physically from the dead in a material body that could be “handled and felt,” yet was a “spiritual” body. “Spiritual” in this case is not used in the sense of being “immaterial.” Flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God, but the Lord Jesus (by His own words) resurrected as “flesh and bone.”

Job lived long before the Lord came to earth, but he confidently knew more than Armstrong and Kovacs. “And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:26). He had a hope that Armstrong and Kovacs have never had. Those who read Kovacs’s books are being exposed to unbiblical teachings that in many aspects are nothing more than recycled Herbert W. Armstrong.

We well may be concerned about the dangers ahead for all Americans, but shouldn’t that motivate us to be doing what God has called us to do? In yoking together with unbiblical teachers, all the good that *WND* desires is compromised. The same people who look to *WND* for encouragement and resources are being exposed to what the Apostle Paul warned so clearly of: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Tm 4:1).

We live in a time of growing biblical illiteracy. Because many are unfamiliar with the genuine, they may be swayed by the arguments of the counterfeit. Again, no one denies the very real peril descending upon this nation. That peril, however, is not alleviated by joining with the enemies of the gospel. In *The Divine Secret*, Kovacs doesn’t present the biblical gospel that sets men free. His message is one more system of “works”:

“By honoring God and keeping His commandments, we’re learning the way the divine family lives. We’re practicing day after day, week after week, year after year how to live like God...” (Kovacs, *The Divine Secret*, 142).

Much like Armstrong, Kovacs’s “gospel” delivers no certainty. And rather like Armstrong, the verses that speak of believers being a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) are made to refer to the resurrection. All that’s left are “works” until that time. Romans 8:11 tells us, “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Kovacs applies that Scripture to the future resurrection of our human bodies. “Yes, all of us are currently sinful, mortal beings headed for everlasting death if we don’t repent...and we can actually ‘put on immortality’ if we’re faithful to God” (*Ibid.*, 52). There is no assurance if our works don’t measure up. “But, once the jump is made from physical bodies to spiritual ones, being literally ‘born OF GOD,’ born into the actual family of God, the Bible indicates sin will not be possible...” (*Ibid.*, 77). No one can miss the parallel to Armstrong who stated, “Until the resurrection, therefore, we cannot see, enter into or inherit the Kingdom of God. WE CANNOT BE BORN AGAIN UNTIL THE RESURRECTION!” (Armstrong, Pamphlet, *Born Again?*).

In conclusion, the “gospel” advanced by Kovacs steals the security of true believers. This unbiblical message is being foisted upon people, as believers join together with unbelievers to reform this nation.

More than 50 years ago A. W. Tozer wrote the essay, “Pragmatism Goes to Church”: “It is useless to plead for the human soul, to insist that what a man can do is less important than what he is. When there are wars to be won, forests to be cleared, rivers to be harnessed, factories to be built, planets to be visited, the quieter claims of the human spirit are likely to go unregarded. The spectacular drama of successful deeds leaves the beholder breathless. Deeds you can see. Factories, cities, highways, rockets are there in plain sight, and they got there by the practical application of means to ends. So who cares about ideals and character and morals? These things are for poets, nice old ladies and philosophers. Let’s get on with the job” (Tozer, “Pragmatism Goes to Church,” from *The Best Of A. W. Tozer*, 1980, 254-256).

May the Lord give us wisdom and insight to know that such unequal yoking can only be counterproductive to the good that we may desire to do.



HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

- 1.) **Denies the trinity by teaching a family of “Gods.”** “The sole value of human life lies in the human spirit and the potential of being begotten of God, later to be born VERY GOD, a child in the GOD FAMILY” (Herbert W. Armstrong, *Mystery of*

the Ages, Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1985, p. 92).

- 2.) **Teaches that humans may attain deity by becoming a member of the “God family.”** “There are only two members in the God Family or Kingdom at the present time—God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. But God is increasing His Family! And YOU can be ‘born’ into it!” (Ambassador College Correspondence Course, Lesson 8, p. 10).
- 3.) **Jesus Christ experienced a “spiritual resurrection,” no longer being “flesh and bone.”** “The Son of God, (was) now no longer human, but composed of SPIRIT - a Spirit Being,” and that “Christ’s body did disappear. Christ was raised as a divine spirit being!” (WCG reprint, “If You Die...Will You Live Again?”, p. 5).



JOSEPH KOVACS

- 1.) **Denies the trinity by teaching a family of “Gods.”** “Yes, God is indeed a family. Jesus is the Word and He’s one member of the God family, and God the Father is yet another member of that same God family” (Kovacs, *The Divine Secret*, p. 24).

- 2.) **Teaches that humans may attain deity by becoming a member of the “God family.”** “The plan of God is that God is reproducing. He’s having children and raising them to be in the family of God. We are called children of God all throughout the New Testament, sons of God. God is having many sons and daughters. Think for a minute: What are the sons of a giraffe? They’re giraffes. What are the children of cats? They’re cats. What are the children of God? They’re Gods. They’re going to be in the God family” (Kovacs, “Children of a giraffe are giraffes, so what are the children of God,” *The Journal*, Issue No. 150, 7/27/12).
- 3.) **Jesus Christ experienced a “spiritual resurrection,” no longer being “flesh and bone.”** “So that we will actually be born into the spirit world, not composed of flesh and blood anymore, but looking like yourself, composed of spirit just like God the Father and Jesus are composed of spirit” (<http://www.wnd.com/2009/12/118220/>).

RELIGIOUS TROJAN HORSE: WHEN BEING "RIGHT" IS WRONG

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL, RIGHT AND LEFT — Excerpts from The Religious Trojan Horse by Brannon Howse

Should Christians promote righteousness within our nation and be concerned about the worldview our various levels of government and education promote? Of course.

After all, God Himself drew the borders of nations and chose the very nation in which each man and woman would be born. God created government. Because we are Christians, we must judge everything against the Word of God, which is a reflection of God's character and nature. Therefore, Christians should support legislation and initiatives that reward the righteous and punish the wicked, purposes for which God created government (Romans 13). The two institutions are to complement one another...but the church is not to become by government, and the government is not to become the church.

The religious right of the 1970s and 1980s has drastically changed and is now a New Religious Right (NRR), embracing and participating in many unbiblical activities and projects. Consistent with this misdirection, many within the NRR seem more interested in being the civil government than in being the church. Some adherents are seemingly so shallow in biblical knowledge and discernment that they fail to recognize the error of their commitment to a social gospel. Among other problems, the NRR embraces ecumenicalism in order to build political coalitions, to increase revenues, and because they simply are not committed to biblical theology and sound doctrine.

[For example], most pro-family organizations claim to be Christian and boast that they embrace "Christian values" because the majority of their donors call themselves "Christian." When it comes to defining what it means to be a Christian, however, most of the New Religious Right will not reflect biblical Christianity because they don't want to offend their Catholic, Mormon, Word of Faith, or New Apostolic Reformation donors. So, in the end, the NRR betrays the Gospel in deference to "another" gospel embraced by these disparate groups. But is "another" gospel of the NRR any different from "another" gospel of the religious left? From whichever side a social gospel originates, it is always man-centered. Its basic claim says man needs to fix or improve his condition through social activism, Christian activism, philanthropy, and good works. A social gospel leaves out the preaching and teaching that sin is the primary reason for the problems of our world.

Rick Warren's social gospel, for instance, involves leaving out the biblical Gospel so he can work with Muslims and other world religions to improve education, address poverty, combat disease, and promote globalism. The social gospel from the NRR is primarily about lowering taxes, decreasing the size of government, and giving people more political and economic liberty. But accomplishing these goals—as laudable as they may be—will not solve man's root problem of sin and rebellion against God. Our problems will not be addressed by more liberalism or more conservatism but only through...the biblical Gospel.

If 80 percent of a society's problems and heartaches are directly related to the demise of the family unit, one merely has to ask why the family is in decline. The answer will quickly ring up "sin." Unfortunately, for many within the NRR, it is too late. They have already compromised the Gospel by their willingness to unite with false teachers. Certain members of the New Religious Right have admonished me...not to expose the unbiblical theology of Mormonism or Catholicism or liberation theology on the NRR airwaves. Such biblical truth offends the unbeliever and causes these ministries to lose donors. What the NRR does not seem to understand is that the culture war is really only a symptom of the serious spiritual problem from which man suffers, and only the preaching of the Gospel will cure this disease. Even if the New Religious Right could implement every law it wants and turn America into one great big town of Mayberry, the result would simply be a more comfortable and moral America from which millions of people could

enter hell. The secular website of *National Review* published an insightful article about this very issue. David French's article "Evangelicals' Collapsing Cultural Influence" notes:

We are more focused on meeting the material needs of the poor than their spiritual needs. Spend much time in the evangelical community, and you'll soon learn that the old-fashioned Gospel-focused mission trip is largely a thing of the past. Now, you go build schools. Now, you go dig water wells. Now, you repair houses. These are worthy goals, all, but service projects by themselves don't change hearts and minds; they often make (frequently) self-inflicted misery more bearable. Service must be accompanied by intentional, vocal evangelism and discipling.

French comes to the same conclusion I announced in the first five words of [my book] *Grave Influence*: "We've lost the culture war." Mr. French explains why: "I once heard it said that following the social and political disruptions of the 1960s and early 1970s, religious conservatives decided that they had to win elections, while secular leftists decided to win the culture—and both groups succeeded. So now here we are, enjoying unprecedented influence on presidential outcomes even as our cultural foundation rots away beneath our feet. Not even the best presidential candidate will fix the family, nor will our most generous service project save a soul."

In Matthew 23, Jesus calls the religious leaders of His day "white-washed tombs." They looked good on the outside. They thought they were promoting morality, but they were dead spiritually. Jesus warned that they would strain out a gnat but swallow a whole camel. And, indeed, the New Religious Right is notorious for such activity. In similar whitewashed-looking causes, the NRR has chosen: 1. *Family values over biblical doctrine*. 2. *Moralizing over evangelizing*. 3. *Prosperity over sacrifice*. 4. *Christian activism over biblical discipleship*. 5. *Compromise over commitment*. 6. *The flag over the cross*. 7. *The White House over the church house*. 8. *The wolves over the sheep*. 9. *An earthly kingdom over the Kingdom of God*.

[For example], the Southern Baptist Convention called for a boycott of the Disney Company, but in 1993 refused to pass a resolution at their national convention condemning the occultism of Freemasonry. Instead, the denomination passed a resolution stating that there are aspects of Freemasonry consistent with Christianity (compare this with Ezekiel 5:11-16; 8:5-18). [Ironically], the New Religious Right will boycott a company whose unsaved executives promote the homosexual agenda but will themselves promote and give credibility to false teachers who preach another Jesus and another gospel [leading millions to hell].

When Christians call on unbelievers to conform to a certain "religious standard" without faith and repentance in Jesus Christ, we run the risk of leading them to believe that becoming a Christian means simply living a good life. No matter how many pieces of legislation become law and no matter the number of laws to which the unsaved conform, they are still lost in sin [so] when the church takes on the role of morality police...we are only addressing the symptoms of their unsaved condition. How can the unregenerate be anything less than they are? Their worldviews are the foundation of their values, and their values are the foundation of their conduct. Until their unbiblical worldviews are transformed into a biblical view through faith and repentance in Jesus Christ, they are slaves to sin.

[Tragically], moralism is just as dangerous and deadly as outright liberalism. As John MacArthur has said, "It makes no difference if an unsaved person is for or against abortion, [is] a political liberal or a conservative, a prostitute or a police officer; he will spend eternity apart from God unless he repents and believes the gospel."

—[See resource pages at right to order *The Religious Trojan Church*.]

NEW! RELIGIOUS TROJAN HORSE BRANNON HOWSE BOOK



Religious Trojan Horse

Howse—Brannon Howse echoes the warning of Jude 3—as urgent now as the day Jude first wrote the words almost 20 centuries ago. Godless worldviews have been eroding Europe’s and America’s Judeo-Christian heritage for years, but now the problem has taken a dire turn for the worse. Although false teachers have been around since biblical times, infiltration of the church has increased alarmingly, just as Jesus predicted in Matthew 24. Well-known evangelical and pro-family leaders have joined in events, alliances, and common causes with a shocking array of unbiblical partners. As a result, many contemporary “Christian” leaders embrace and encourage the false Jesus and false gospels of Mormonism, the New Age Movement, Roman Catholicism, Word of Faith teachers, the New Apostolic Reformation, Eastern Mysticism, and the spiritual left. Our bitterest philosophical enemies have made it past the gatekeepers of both mainstream and evangelical Christian thought, and anti-Christian worldviews have assembled within the walls of our churches. As a result, hostile forces wreak havoc in the minds and hearts of believers who are caught unaware. In *Religious Trojan Horse*, Brannon exposes the outrageous breach of integrity in the church, which has been compromised by popular and dangerous teachings that are anything but scriptural. With thorough and precise documentation of every claim and accusation, Brannon shows exactly who is to blame and how. In this book, you’ll discover:

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- How Rick Warren, Tony Blair, Joel Osteen, C. Peter Wagner, Glenn Beck, Mike Bickle, Rick Joyner, Peter Drucker, Jim Wallis, Tony Campolo, and others have assisted in building the religious Trojan horse

“Certain men” are indeed creeping in unnoticed, but God is still in charge—and working decisively through those who will not exchange the truth for a lie. *Religious Trojan Horse* will help you become one who stands against the invaders. Worldview Weekend, 488 pp.

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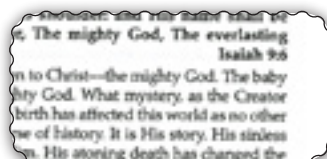
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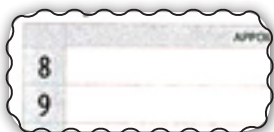
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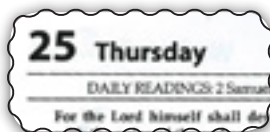
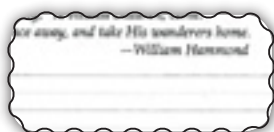
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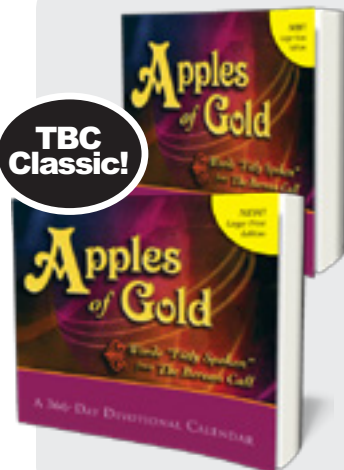
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