



Where is Your **TREASURE?**

*Set your affection on things above,
not on things on the earth.*

— COLOSSIANS 3:2

The
Berean
Call

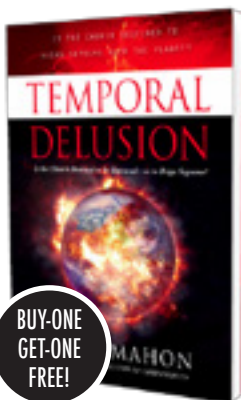
JULY 2014

WHAT THINK YE OF HEAVEN?

by T. A. McMAHON

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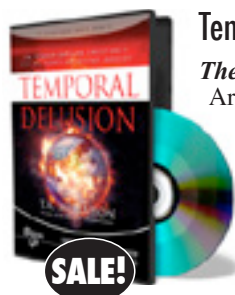
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Seven years after publication of the controversial ground-breaking bestseller *The Seduction of Christianity* in 1985, its authors, Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon, joined forces on another front. TBC was formed under the direction of Dave Hunt for the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

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

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

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

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

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

JULY 2014 • VOL XXIX NO. 7

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Subscriptions

The Berean Call newsletter is published monthly and sent free of charge to U.S. addresses (\$12/yr outside the U.S.). To subscribe, please write PO Box 7019, Bend, OR 97708, or call 1-800-937-6638.

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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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What Think Ye Of Heaven?

T. A. McMahon

If I could go back and correct anything attitude-wise about my walk with the Lord for nearly four decades, it would be that early on I would like to have had more of an eternal perspective. I didn't exactly buy the lie that "to be too heavenly minded is to be no earthly good," but in some ways my thoughts and actions reflected that idea. I'm much older now, which has certainly increased the amount of time I spend thinking about Heaven. I'm sure that happens to all of us seniors who know and love the Lord. Wanting to be with Him for eternity is an exciting desire soon to be realized by us, unless—better yet—the Lord hastens the event by His imminent return for His saints.

What then of those born-again young people starting out on life's journey, looking ahead to college, careers, marriage, raising a family, and all the rest of the wonderful opportunities life can provide? For many, Heaven is a distant destination and a remote hope. Yes, it's a nice idea, but that's "way down the line of life," according to the thinking of many. Some might even complain that spending one's life occupied with thoughts of Heaven is a dreamer's folly or indicates an escapist mentality that shies away from dealing with the truly important issues of life and might be considered impractical to the point of negligence.

People can and do make up their own ideas about Heaven, but all of us are better served by going to the One who created Heaven and who has revealed to us the truth about it and its purpose. That, of course, would be God and His Word. It behooves us to survey the Scriptures for the truth about Heaven—which God alone can and has provided.

First of all, Heaven is an actual place. It's not some sort of wishful location where it will be "kinda nice to reside" after our life on earth is over. It's not some sort of Pleasure Island, nor is it our Native American's happy hunting ground, nor the Viking's Valhalla, nor the eternal lakeside cottage we've always desired. Nothing to inspire self-gratification will be found there—nothing to fulfill the lust of the flesh—as that would greatly diminish the glorious wonders that God has prepared for the believer!

Heaven is a joyous mystery: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). It will be an environment of bliss that has no earthly comparison, and we are blessed to read of some earthly experiences that *won't* be found there: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

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. WHEN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR LIFE, SHALL APPEAR, THEN SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY.

— *Colossians 3:2-4*

Heaven is presented throughout Scripture as a place where those who are saved will receive rewards for their fruitful works on earth: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Hebrews 6:9-10). One's eternal treasure is generated by good works: "Charge them...that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to [share]; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:17-19). Continually we are told "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal" (Matthew 6:19), but rather produce "a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (Luke 12:33). The comparison is between earthly goods that are temporal and heavenly treasure that is eternal. Jesus told the rich young man whose

wealth had captured his heart, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matthew 19:21).

We don't know what "treasure in Heaven" exactly means, but we do know that its value far and away exceeds anything our earthly life has or could produce. Beginning perhaps with the gracious words of Jesus, "Well done, good and faithful servant," it will include rewards and crowns, as well as opportunities to rule and reign with our Savior and King during the Millennium (Revelation 20:6). Again, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Furthermore, whatever God has prepared, as supremely wonderful as it will be, it will nevertheless pale by comparison with our being in the presence of Jesus, whom we love and who loves us more than we can comprehend. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3). No matter what Jesus has prepared, nothing could be better for believers than to be where He is. Paul was totally aware of that joyful expectation when he wrote, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot [know] not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; *which is far better*" (Philippians 1:21-23). It's *far better* because our "life is hid with Christ in God" and when "Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:3-4). Being with Jesus forever is both the purpose and pinnacle of life. It is the believer's *raison d'être*, his or her reason for living.

What then is the criterion for entrance into Heaven? When the religious leaders asked Jesus what they must do to work the works of God, He replied, "This is the work of God, that ye *believe on him* whom he hath sent" (John 6:28-29). That is the only condition that must be met. The Philippian jailer was instructed: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved" (Acts

16:31). Peter, as well, declared, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Believing the gospel—the good news that Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, paid the full penalty for one’s sins—reconciles one to God and makes him fit for eternal life with Christ. The psalmist writes, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath [Jesus] removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12), which Paul underscores in Romans 6:22: “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” Sin is still a factor in the temporal life of a believer, but its infinite penalty has been completely paid for and its power will cease at Heaven’s door. Again, one’s entrance into Heaven, a place where sin cannot appear, is only possible because of Jesus, “who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14).

The Bible does not present Heaven as a place for believers to move on to after they have done their best to shape up the world into the Kingdom of God. That’s not going to happen. The Kingdom of God will not be manifested on earth until the King himself returns, and He will return with those whose residence has been in Heaven while the earth and its inhabitants will have been subjected to worldwide destruction through God’s righteous judgment. “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). The prophet Jeremiah refers to it as “the time of Jacob’s trouble” out of which a remnant of Israel will be saved (Jeremiah 30:7).

What does all the above say about one’s activities here on earth? For the most part, what the Scriptures teach has been marginalized if not outright rejected even by those who claim to be Christians. Mankind has attempted to set up its own utopian kingdom from the time of Babel to the Holy Roman Empire to Calvin’s “kingdom” in Geneva to Hitler’s Third Reich to the Kingdom Now and Take Dominion enthusiasts to the Christian Reconstructionists and Coalition on Revival proponents to many of today’s cults. Also of that biblically erroneous mentality are those Christians whose emphasis is on solving the world’s problems such as disease, hunger, poverty, illiteracy, immorality, and social injustice. Although some such organizations include sharing the gospel in their “good works” endeavors, the majority have drifted away from what Christ commanded: “Go ye therefore, and

teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you [always], even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20). Since sin is at the heart of all the world’s problems, then even good works that avoid the salvation that only Christ provides, no matter how sincere, are anti-christ endeavors.

Not only is the great commission being undermined by various forms of “works salvation” but a very significant emphasis of Scripture is being rejected: namely, that believers in Christ are to recognize that *this planet is not our home* but simply a starting point, intended for our temporal existence, which has, as the objective, to be with Jesus for all eternity. We are sojourners here, pilgrims, Heaven-bound to be with our Savior.

FOR OUR [CITIZENSHIP] IS IN HEAVEN;
FROM WHENCE ALSO WE LOOK FOR THE
SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

— *Philippians 3:20*

“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 12:26; 17:24). We must not forget that Scripture tells us that this present universe is headed for termination following the thousand-year reign of Jesus: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

Those who take a dim view of Christians who are highly motivated by the hope of Heaven have not read the Scriptures, or, if they have, they must not believe them. Chapter 11 of Hebrews characterizes the heroes of the faith as “strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” who desired “a better country, that is, an heavenly [one],” and adds that the world was not worthy of them (Hebrews 11:13,16,38). The complaint is that a focus on Heaven results in a “do nothing” time here on earth. Again, such complainers aren’t taking the Word of God at its word. Over and over we find verses exhorting

us to holiness and fruitfulness as we look forward to Heaven: “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23); “That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to [give], willing to [share], laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Timothy 6:18-19); “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Peter 1:17). “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [conduct] and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Peter 3:11-14).

Jesus gave a number of parables that instruct us about how we, as believers, should regard Heaven. Therefore, we need to heed His words in order to keep from being sidetracked in our sojourning through this temporal life. “And the disciples came and said to him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given” (Matthew 13:10-11). Those who would reject Christ would also reject Heaven. How important, therefore, should Heaven be in the lives of those who believe? Nothing here should supersede it. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:44-46).

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1-2). “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Luke 12:34). “For our [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20). Amen and amen.

TBC

Quotable

The sin of man and the love of God are inseparable components of the gospel, and both must be preached.

—Barry Stagner

Q&A

QUESTION: What is your take on the “Blood Moons” teachings we’re hearing from John Hagee, Mark Biltz, and others? Is there any validity in what they’re saying?

RESPONSE: We have a number of concerns with this popular distraction. The first eclipse of the highly publicized “blood moon” tetrad—a series of four sequential total lunar eclipses—passed on April 15 without event; yet there is still confusion in the body of Christ.

The term “blood moon” as popularly used misses the biblical sense of the term. There is no evidence to suggest that the perceived discoloration of the moon during a total lunar eclipse is what is referenced in Scripture. Eclipses are of relatively short duration, are entirely predictable, are visible only to part of the planet—and although purported to be a potential herald of Christ’s return to the Mount of Olives, three of the four in this tetrad cannot even be viewed from *anywhere* in the Middle East, and the fourth only partially in the Promised Land. [See NASA maps here: <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/lunar.html>]

Attempts to connect the tetrad with the Second Advent are based on speculation and faulty interpretation of Scripture, most notably Joel 2:30-31, Matthew 24:29-30, and Revelation 6:12-17.

And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. (Jl 2:30-31)

...[A]fter the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven...and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Mt 24:29-30)

And...when he had opened the sixth seal... the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth.... And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and...[all men] hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us...from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Rv 6:12-17)

The “blood moon” teachers focus on the moon’s apparent color and timing as the primary signs; but as the above scriptures reveal, comparing a total lunar eclipse to this prophetic context is like comparing a firecracker with a nuclear device. Most importantly, while we affirm the doctrine of imminency for a pre-Tribulation rapture (which indeed *could* fall on a Jewish feast day), speculation that the “blood moons” tetrad of 2014-2015 may be a harbinger of the Apocalypse is completely without basis—and quite literally impossible, as we shall see.

Mark Biltz, pastor of El Shaddai Ministries in Bonney Lake, Washington, is generally recognized as the first to report (as early as 2007-08) that all four eclipses in the current tetrad cycle directly coincide with Jewish feast days. Biltz, a popular teacher in the Hebrew Roots Movement, suggested that this tetrad—the last to occur in this century—could herald the Second Advent of Christ:

When I talk about the second coming I am not referring to the rapture but to Messiah's feet landing on the Mt of Olives in Zech 14. I am not setting dates for the rapture. The only dates I am giving [are] the dates NASA gives us for eclipses and the dates God gives us on His calendar and then I bring in the connection. ...I did say, and again say, IF these eclipses in 2015 are what the Lord was referring to, then 2015 would look like a possible year for His feet to land on the Mt of Olives. And, IF this is true then the tribulation could, not would, start this fall [2008] at the Feast of Trumpets. (<http://archive.today/hZES>)

This scenario is theologically untenable for all who hold to a pre-Trib, mid-Trib, or post-Trib Rapture. Why? These perspectives would presently place the church in the latter half of the “great and terrible day of the Lord.” Only those who dismiss the biblical timeline of seven years of the Great Tribulation following the Rapture and spiritualize end-times prophecy (e.g., amillennialists and preterists) could possibly expect the Second Advent in conjunction with the “blood moon” tetrad that concludes September 28, 2015.

Believers may be certain of one thing: *All* prophecy pertaining to the Second Coming must be *literally* fulfilled in order for Jesus to return to Jerusalem. This includes the Rapture, global government, the Gog-Magog war (Ezekiel 38-39), the peace treaty with Israel, construction of the third temple, its desecration by Antichrist, the mark of the beast, etc. Therefore, if even *one* of these prophecies is not fulfilled *by 2015*, then the

entire “blood moon” tetrad is nothing more than a delusion.

In spite of this reality, WND (World Net Daily) has just published Biltz’s book, *Blood Moons: Decoding the Imminent Heavenly Signs*. Readers may recall that WND founder and publisher, Joseph Farah (another Hebrew Roots proponent), was similarly captivated by Jonathan Cahn’s *The Harbinger*. In the Foreword to Biltz’s book, Farah writes:

God is trying to get our attention. And I am convinced He has anointed Mark Biltz to help us understand the times in which we live and the urgent warnings God is trying to deliver to us all. I have not been as enthusiastic about a powerful spiritual teaching since I worked with Rabbi Jonathan Cahn.... *Blood Moons*...is that kind of message—one so detailed, so improbable, so mysterious it could only be the result of divine handiwork.

In truth, the coincidence of the timing with Jewish feast days is not a mathematical miracle. A total lunar eclipse can occur *only* during a full moon, and the Hebrew calendar is based on lunar cycles. As the website *Israel Today* reminds us: “Since both Passover and Sukkot are scheduled on the full moon, both have occasionally coincided with blood moons, the last time being the start of Sukkot in 1996” (emphasis added). (<http://www.israeltoday.co.il/Default.aspx?tabid=178&nid=24559>)

Our modern ability for virtually anyone to calculate exactly when and where these events will be visible (using NASA websites and home computer software) raises another question: If *predictable* lunar and solar eclipses are of *prophetic* significance concerning *Israel*, why are many of them only visible *elsewhere*? By comparison to the Scriptures, are such relatively mundane events truly a sign from God heralding the Apocalypse—the Unveiling, the *Revelation* of Jesus Christ as Messiah, King of Kings and Lord of all?

Unfortunately—should these dates come and go without any earth-shattering event taking place in conjunction with the tetrad—this rampant speculation by peddlers of false prophetic views will give four more reasons for the world to speak evil of the truth. As Dave Hunt exhorted:

Christ, who rebuked the rabbis for not knowing and heeding the signs of His first coming (Lk 12:56), gave specific endtime signs by which the nearness of His second coming would be recognized—and surely He gave these signs for a purpose. Unfortunately, some prophetic writers and speakers attempt to identify details where only a broad picture is given in Scripture.... Such attempts lead to confusion....[We must] stick to the plain language of Scripture and to the unvarnished facts. (<http://www.thebereanall.org/content/may-1999-q-and-a-1>)



IN DEFENSE *of the* FAITH

BIBLICAL ANSWERS *to* CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

What About the Manuscripts?

QUESTION: It is my understanding that the Bible we have comes from a handful of ancient manuscripts that are copies of copies of copies of the originals that have long been lost. These originals, especially for the Old Testament, could have been several thousand years older than the oldest manuscripts. How do we know that what we have today is even close to the originals?

RESPONSE: Bernard Ramm reminds us: “Jews preserved it [the Old Testament text] as no other manuscript has ever been preserved . . . they kept tabs on every letter. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity—scribes, lawyers, Massoretes. Who ever counted the letters and syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle, Cicero or Seneca [as the Jews did for the Old Testament]?” No wonder, then, that the Isaiah scroll found among the Dead Sea Scrolls showed no significant variation in 1,000 years of copying. In contrast, as already noted, there are many questions concerning the text of Shakespeare, which is only about 400 years old.

Biblical scholar F. F. Bruce writes: “There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament.” J. Harold Greenlee explains: “[T]he number of available manuscripts of the New Testament is overwhelmingly greater than those of any work of ancient literature . . . [and] the earliest extant manuscripts of the New Testament were written much closer to the date of the original writing. . . .” For the sake of comparison, here are some well-accepted, ancient secular works showing the author, the date written, the number of manuscripts surviving, and the number of years after the date written for the earliest manuscript:

Sophocles	496–406 BC	100	1,400
Herodotus	480–425 BC	8	1,300
Euripedes	480–406 BC	9	1,500
Thucydides	460–400 BC	8	1,300
Plato	427–327 BC	7	1,200
Aristotle	384–322 BC	5	1,400
Demosthenes	383–322 BC	200	1,300
Caesar	100–44 BC	10	1,000
Lucretius	60 BC	2	1,600
Tacitus	100 BC	20	1,000

In contrast, there are about 24,600 copies of New Testament manuscripts, some of which date back within a century of the originals and many others

within about 300 to 400 years. Then why does one continually hear the false claim that the biblical manuscripts are not reliable? The fact that this lie persists in academic circles demonstrates the extreme prejudice against the Bible *because of what it says*. God’s Word convicts the conscience. How interesting that questions about the accuracy of the manuscripts are never raised for other ancient writings—unless they offer proof of the Bible’s validity. *The Antiquities of the Jews*, by Josephus, offers considerable verification of the New Testament and the life and death of Jesus, so it, too, comes under vicious attack.

The Bible is the most quoted book in the world, thousands of times more so than any secular work. That is not only true today but has always been the case. Consequently, one can reproduce the entire New Testament and much of the Old Testament by quotations contained in personal letters and epistles written within a century after Christ commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel.

Incomparable Reliability

As for the validity of the Old Testament manuscripts and their reliability, consider the following from Princeton’s Robert D. Wilson in his book *Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*. Fluent in over 40 Semitic languages, he was one of the greatest language experts and scholars of all time. Professor Wilson writes:

“For forty-five years continuously . . . I have devoted myself to the one great study of the Old Testament, in all its languages, in all its archaeology, in all its translations.

“[T]he critics of the Bible who go to it in order to find fault . . . claim to themselves all knowledge and all virtue and all love of truth. One of their favorite phrases is, “All scholars agree.” When a man [says that] . . . I wish to know who the scholars are and why they agree. Where do they get their evidence. . . ? I defy any man to make an attack upon the Old Testament on the ground of evidence that I cannot investigate. . . .

“After I learned the necessary languages I set about the investigation of every consonant in the Hebrew Old Testament. There are about a million and a quarter of these; and it took me many years to achieve my task. I had to observe the variations of the text . . . in the manuscripts, or in the notes of the Massorettes . . . or in the various versions, or in the parallel passages, or in the conjectural emendations of critics; and then I had to classify the results . . . to reduce the Old Testament criticism to an absolutely objective science; something which is based on evidence, and not on opinion. . . .

“The result of those 45 years’ study which I have given to the text has been this: I can affirm that there is not a page of the Old Testament concerning which we need have any doubt. . . .

“[For example, to illustrate its accuracy]: There are 29 ancient kings whose names are mentioned not only in the Bible but also on monuments of their own time. . . . There are 195 consonants in these 29 proper names. Yet we find that in the documents of the Hebrew Old Testament there are only two or three out of the entire 195 about which there can be any question of their being written in exactly the same way as they were inscribed on their own monuments [which archaeologists have to date discovered]. Some of these go back 4,000 years and are so written that every letter is clear and correct. . . .

“Compare this accuracy with . . . the greatest scholar of his age, the librarian at Alexandria in 200 BC. He compiled a catalogue of the kings of Egypt, 38 in all. Of the entire number only 3 or 4 are recognizable. He also made a list of the kings of Assyria; in only one case can we tell who is meant; and that one is not spelt correctly. Or take Ptolemy, who drew up a register of 18 kings of Babylon. Not one of them is properly spelt; you could not make them out at all if you did not know from other sources to what he is referring.

“If anyone talks about the Bible, ask him about the kings mentioned in it. There are 29 kings referred to, and ten different countries among these 29; all of which

are included in the Bible and on monuments. Every one of these is given his right name in the Bible, his right country, and placed in correct chronological order. Think what that means. . . !

“While the study of the religious systems of the ancient peoples has shown that there was amongst them a groping after God, nowhere is it to be seen that they reached any clear apprehension of the One True God, the Creator, Preserver, Judge, Saviour and Sanctifier of His people. Their religions were of an outward kind; the Old Testament religion is essentially one of the mind and heart; a religion of love,

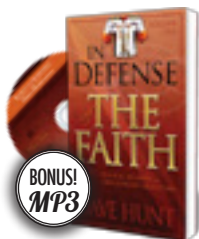
joy, faith, hope, and salvation through the grace of God. How can we account for this?

“The prophets of Israel declared that their teaching came from God. The modern critical school is antagonistic to this claim. They say that the prophets gave utterance to the ideas of their own time, and that they were limited by their environment. But if this is so how does it come about that neither from the oracles of Thebes and Memphis, nor from Delphi and Rome, nor from Babylon, nor from the deserts of Media, but from the sheep-folds and humble homes of Israel, yea, from the captive by the river of an alien land, came forth those great messages of hope and salvation?”

*J*EW^S preserved it [the Old Testament text] as no other manuscript has ever been preserved . . . they kept tabs on every letter. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity . . .

— BERNARD RAMM

— An excerpt from IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH (pg. 75-79) by DAVE HUNT



In Defense of the Faith — BUY ONE, GET ONE FREE!

Hunt—When confronted with uncomfortable questions from atheists and agnostics, cultists and pagans, or skeptics and mystics, do your once-firm convictions begin to crumble and compromise? Do you tend to take flight—or instead, are you able to stand firm and “earnestly contend for the faith”? (Jude 3) With the keen eye of an experienced treasure hunter, the author helps readers probe and unearth the incredible wealth of guidance found in God’s Word. The resulting adventure will not only strengthen the faith of believers but equip them to live daily according to His revealed truth in an increasingly hostile world. **BONUS MP3:** Included in the book is a one-disc MP3 radio discussion of *In Defense of the Faith* from *Search the Scriptures Daily*. The Berean Call, 373 pp. Retail \$24.99

B60668 Through August 2014, buy one copy of *In Defense of the Faith*, get one **FREE!** wt 1.1 **\$22.50**

TBC NewsWatch

CHARISMA HOUSE'S NEW TRANSLATION

CHRISTIANHEADLINES.COM, 5/28/14, "CHARISMA HOUSE INTRODUCES MODERN ENGLISH VERSION OF BIBLE" [EXCERPTS]: The translation, called the Modern English Version (MEV) seeks to help readers interpret meaning of the scriptures while using contemporary language.

"To Bible readers who value biblical truth, the MEV literally translates God's Word in a way that preserves the message but remains readable for today's world. Because of this, we anticipate that the MEV will have broad ecumenical and consumer acceptance," [our emphasis] said Tessie DeVore, Charisma House executive vice president.

The MEV website says the translation "provides clarity for a new generation of Bible readers. The MEV also accurately communicates God's Word anew as it capitalizes references of God, 'maintaining reverence' for the Scriptures."

The translation promises to keep the meaning of the scriptures intact, without embellishment or distortion.

(<http://goo.gl/PS6kB6>)

[TBC: The meaning of the Scriptures cannot be kept intact and still have "broad ecumenical acceptance." 2 Corinthians 6:14 still states, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"]

DRIVE THROUGH PRAYER LANES INCREASING

CHRISTIANHEADLINES.COM, 5/30/14, "Drive-Through Prayer Lanes Spreading Across the Country" [EXCERPTS]: "People go to Dunkin' Donuts for coffee, not because it's the best coffee, but because it's the most convenient. In a similar way, this is a port of entry for somebody to begin to connect with God in an intentional kind of way." So explains the pastor of the latest church to open a drive-through lane for people seeking prayer.

Churches from Florida to Kansas and Illinois to California are picking up the trend. One purchased a nearby bank building, staffed it with volunteers, and opened for people to drive through. The church uses the bank's deposit tube for people who want to write down their prayer requests rather than speak to a church member.

I think something more visceral than mere convenience is at work here. Our culture is becoming increasingly secularized: the highest percentage in history says they have no religious preference and states that religion is "not very important" in their lives. But secularism does not change our basic need for God. For instance, 76 percent of Americans say religion is losing its influence today; after 9-11, just 39 percent agreed.

(<http://goo.gl/lSg15w>)

CHRISTIANITY CONTINUES TO GROW IN CHINA

CHRISTIANHEADLINES.COM, 6/4/14, "Christianity Continues to Grow in China in Spite of Persecution" [EXCERPTS]: As the world commemorates the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre today, leaders maintain that Christianity in the People's Republic of China is growing rapidly in spite of continued persecution by the nation's Communist government.

The Brookings Institute recently held a panel discussion in Washington, DC titled "Christianity in China: A Force for Change?" Experts claim the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre motivated the underground Church and continues to impassion believers.

"The really committed, devout believers will be increasingly strengthened in their faith by this 'winds of persecution' and honestly the church buildings may be torn down, but that doesn't mean the congregations themselves have scattered," Carsten Vala, assistant professor at the Political Science Department of Loyola University Maryland and one of the panelists [said].

In advance of the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) reports that Chinese human rights lawyers, activists and artists have been detained and disappeared for offenses as small as gathering to talk about what happened in 1989. Those who have been released have been warned not to participate in any kind of remembrance activity.

According to CSW dozens of churches in Zhejiang Province have had all or parts of their structure removed or demolished, or have been threatened with demolition. The churches affected include both Protestant and Catholic, registered and unregistered. Some have had signs removed, while others have been completely demolished; almost all have been ordered to remove religious symbols, most often the cross.

(<http://goo.gl/Q9LXFr>)

THE CLIMATE CHANGE FUNDAMENTALISTS

FRONTPAGEMAG.COM, 5/20/14, "THE CLIMATE CHANGE FUNDAMENTALISTS" [EXCERPTS]: Climate change fundamentalists are predicting an apocalypse. Human depredation in the form of unbridled materialism is the cause. Any dissent from the fundamentalists' doomsday prophecies [and] if their radical prescriptions to save humanity and Mother Earth are not followed is regarded as heresy.

Charge the well-funded climate change "deniers" with committing "criminal negligence" for "their willful disregard for human life," says Lawrence Torcello, a philosophy professor at the Rochester Institute of Technology. After all, heretics must be punished.

Stop job-creating energy independence initiatives such as the Keystone XL pipeline, says the former director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, James Hansen, which he called the "fuse to the biggest carbon bomb on the planet." Hansen was arrested during the course of a civil disobedience protest against the pipeline as he sat in front of a banner proclaiming, "Witness for Climate and Creation." Who knew that a pipeline transporting oil to the United States, which would otherwise travel by rail or be shipped elsewhere such as to China, the world's largest emitter of carbon gases, would upset God's plan of creation?

Hansen co-authored...a scare-mongering paper entitled "Assessing 'Dangerous Climate Change': Required Reduction of Carbon Emissions to Protect Young People, Future Generations and Nature." The paper, published in December 2013, predicted "mass extinctions" of species and demanded "urgent change to our energy and carbon pathway to avoid dangerous consequences for young people and other life on Earth." The authors moralized that human-caused climate change is on par with the evil of slavery. It represented intergenerational injustice, they said, for which they recommended there be legal remedies.

(<http://goo.gl/JUffO9>)

[TBC: Though called "fundamentalists," they're fundamentally wrong, behaving the same as liberal theologians in the church. They manipulate science as liberal theologians manipulate or abandon the Scriptures.]

PLEASE NOTE: NewsWatch URLs are shortened versions of the original website links and are case sensitive.

T. A.'s Speaking Schedule

- Aug 29-31** **TBC Conference**
Bend, OR
(800) 937-6638
www.thebereanall.org
- Sep 6** **Midwest Hebrew Ministries**
Arden Hills, MN
(763) 427-7162
- Oct 17-18** **Discern for Life Youth Conf.**
Niles, MI (near S. Bend, IN)
www.discernment-ministries.org

STS 24/7 Broadcast Schedule

- July 4/11** **Carl Kerby, Jr.**
Video Games
- July 18/25** **Greg Durel**
What's new with the RCC?

Listen to Search the Scriptures 24/7 at:
www.thebereanall.org/radio
(Schedule is subject to change.)

Letters

Mr. McMahon,

I've always thought that your magazine has a very criticizing spirit, and now, after I saw how you put down the wonderful movie *Son of God*, I see that you also have a hateful spirit.

You even criticize *The Bible* mini-series so lovingly made by the very talented Mark Burnett and Roma Downey, which is a masterpiece. The series attracted so many people to the Lord who otherwise didn't know anything about the Bible. Diogo Morgado was excellent as Jesus. Maybe he is a sinful human portraying infinite God, but he did it with more love than you ever did with your poisonous pen.

If you criticized the movie *Noah* I could see your point...but to criticize the beautiful movie *Son of God* is just not fair....It is...about love of Jesus, hope, and eternal life....So don't be overly critical of your Christian brothers and sisters. AG (NY)

Dear Staff,

I would like to deeply thank everyone involved in The Berean Call for the many years they have spent in preaching the gospel and helping people to discern truth from error. Your work has had a definite impact in my own life....My parents were tied up with the Mormon cult for seven years when I was a child and they broke free from that when they saw the movie *The God Makers*.

Ten years ago, my mother was diagnosed with Schizophrenia...and has been in and out of hospitals ever since. Psychology offered no hope of a cure for her....After watching *Wide is the Gate* and seeing the occultic roots of psychology I have seen that it's nothing but a doctrine of demons! The problem with my mother is a spiritual one and there is a cure in the finished work of Jesus at the cross! TS (email)

Tom and staff,

Thank you so much for your valuable ministry. You've provided me with such insight into a "darkened world professing a false Christianity." Here in prison we are constantly bombarded with legalistic, Calvinist, or non-eternal security teachers who so confuse those who fail to "search the Scriptures daily." Today I'm crucified with Christ, yielding to Him daily, dying to self, and walking in newness of life. DC (NY, prisoner)

Dear Mr. McMahon,

I want to assure you that I never get tired of hearing truth. You commented in your article *The Bible According to Hollywood 2*, "For those who may agree but are a little tired of my crying out for discernment regarding 'biblical' movies, you have my apology." I never get tired of you speaking truth. Keep up the good work and be encouraged, brother. No apology required. You speak in love for those who are your brothers and sisters. God bless you and yours. SB (AL)

Dear TBC,

Thank you [for your online conference]. Praise the Lord, I have had church for the past three days! It is truly lonely and we have been to so many churches in the past couple years. The heaven has attacked the "Bible Believing" churches in my city. We have no place anymore, so this conference and your newsletters and resources are a godsend for us now. Thank you for this conference and can we have more? I am getting a sense of the underground church now. I am writing from Canada, and yes our Prime Minister is a believer, but the state of the churches in my city is very bleak. The Q and A with Greg Durel was especially good. He says it as it is and he was encouraging in his truthfulness. Thank you again for all your work for the Lord and His believing church. MB (Canada)

Dear Mr. McMahon,

I just read the Letters section of your April 2014 newsletter, and one writer demanded you examine your doctrine in "the light of God's Word and Paul's gospel. There is no Rapture." It took me less than a minute to find 1 Corinthians 15:51,52 and cross references to 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 and Philippians

3:21. There are many other cross references to these verses. I only have an Associates Degree in general studies and no formal Bible class other than the church that I attend. I find that the writer of the above mentioned letter is the one who needs to examine their doctrine in light of God's Word and Gospel. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul all taught the same Gospel. Thankfully it is easy to apply Acts 17:11 in this case and see whose teaching is in line and whose is not. Keep up the good work. SM (MO)

TBC Notes

How's It Going?

At the risk of belaboring something that may put a few people off, I nevertheless have to ask how your habit of reading the Word daily is going.

The reasons for this exhortation (harassment, nudging, encouraging, badgering, etc.) are many, but consider this one: from the observation that a widespread deception is growing rapidly throughout the church there is only one sure way to avoid being deceived. We must be continually in the Scriptures, not only growing in our understanding but living out what we read. There is no better antidote or prevention program for the apostasy that the Bible tells us will characterize the last days.

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:4, 24).

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;...Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie..." (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 9-11).

T. A. McMAHON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MINECRAFT: FRIEND OR FOE?

- WRITTEN BY CARL KERBY, JR., AND DREW THORWALL OF APOLOMEDIA -

WHAT ABOUT MINECRAFT?

WOULD it surprise you to hear that video games carry spiritual messages? Sophistication in graphics isn't the only thing that has progressed over the years as storytelling and cultural commentary in games both rival that of any other media. The amount of spiritual content in video games has increased exponentially. Running a ministry that deals with video games, as we do, we get all kinds of questions about specific games. Perhaps the most common question we receive is, "What about Minecraft?"

To help answer this question, we'll give you a little background on spirituality in games. We'll see what it looks like to wrestle with questions of ethics within a game universe before showing some specific examples of intense spiritual messages.

Minecraft was first launched as a tech-demo in 2009 and has exploded in popularity, as it allows the player free rein to "craft" and build nearly anything he or she can imagine. A crude comparison would be to think of it as an infinite set of virtual Legos. There is much to like about Minecraft, and its various difficulty settings allow it to be tailored to audiences young and old, making it a favorite for families with young children as well as the hard-core gamer. It can be played on many systems whether it be a top-of-the-line PC or even on your phone. But would you be surprised if we told you that Minecraft also delivers a spiritual message?

We'll get to that, but first let's give a little more background. Spirituality in many forms is represented extensively in modern games. At times it may serve as a plot device (i.e. seeking enlightenment or confronting God). Spiritual character archetypes (or stereotypes) are used to depict either the hero of the game, or, more commonly, the villain (i.e., a church or spiritual leader who brainwashes their followers). There is often an undercurrent of spirituality, which may aid in the search for the "meaning of life," determining the nature of good and evil, or for understanding the nature of God. The reality of spiritual content in games can be as intriguing as it can be dangerous, but it can also provide many opportunities for spiritual conversations if we are equipped to hold the games we play up to the light of God's Word.

Parents who ask the questions about specific games are often hoping that there is someone out there who can give a simple answer to what is truly a complex issue. Sometimes, we at Apolomedia get the feeling that people want us to be "game priests," making declarations of blessing or curse for what to play or not to play. However, one doesn't just need a thumbs-up or thumbs-down on specific games! Everyone needs to know how to handle any challenge, question, or spiritual topic that may arise. We believe that the most important thing we do through our ministry is to teach parents and gamers to get into God's Word and discover who God is and what it looks like to glorify Him in all that we do, even gaming.

Got it? Ok, now let's get back to Minecraft. Its popularity, creativity, and ability to be expanded without a separate new game release means that Minecraft will be around for quite some time. We have had some experience playing the game, but the vast time commitment required to "beat" the game was more than we could afford. In fact, for a long time many players did not even know it had an ending! Nonetheless, it is a very creative and

engaging game in which one can mine materials to build towers, buildings, bridges, and statues. The best way we have found to describe it is to compare the game to a digital canvas with a full set of paints and brushes. When you play Minecraft, *you* are the artist and the game is your canvas.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

No one brought up any spiritual questions about Minecraft at first, though there were some initial concerns with the game. The "zombie-like" creeper characters could frighten little children (and skittish adults!). There is also a depiction of a digital hell in the game that they call "The Nether," designed to be a fiery pit that invokes the imagery of hell. Now we're getting closer, but even that is only available in some modes of the game.

Another concern, as is raised from time to time with video games, is the addictive quality. There is so much to do, so much to create, that the time put into the game can be limitless.

Is there really a spiritual message to be concerned about? If there is, what can we do about it? Ban the game? Burn it? Delete it? That might be the easy way out, but let's dig a little deeper together. We always try to teach people two things when it comes to video games: 1) Watch *what* you play. Don't take anything for granted, and don't give anything the benefit of the doubt. Understand the messages, go to the Word of God, and find the answers. As 1 Thessalonians 5:21 tells us, "*Test everything, hold on to the good*"; 2) Watch *how long* you are playing. We don't believe that playing video games is wrong—we are gamers ourselves! However, it is important that you make sure that they don't consume your life. Have you heard the old saying "show me your checkbook, and I'll tell you what matters to you"? The same goes with our time. Show me how you spend your time each day, and I will show you what's important in your life. Ephesians 5:16-17 says, "*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*"

As we began to watch what we were playing and opened our eyes to the potential messages in Minecraft, even we were surprised by the spiritual content we discovered. Although it may be primarily a game of building blocks, Minecraft nonetheless does have a plot and underlying themes. Let's take a look at the nature of the game itself. Strangely, and perhaps unintentionally, this game raises ethical dilemmas for the player. When playing Minecraft online, you have the freedom to do and act however you wish, even in worlds created by other players. There is a practice within the game called "griefing," in which one player intentionally destroys the work of another in order to cause them grief!

That raises an interesting question: Is it *wrong* to do something wrong in a game? It's just a game, right? Let this illustration help you think that question through. You recall that we have described Minecraft as a canvas. There are many talented artists in the real world. If you were to give one a canvas, he might make a beautiful work of art that could be used to glorify God by reflecting His creativity. Others, however, could take the same canvas and the same set of paint and paintbrushes, and paint something grotesque, ugly, oppressive, even evil.

In Minecraft, you never know what kind of "artwork" the other players will make. (Parents—that means that you need to be

extra careful about whom they play with and how they play when online.) But let's get back to that artist. Imagine he works for weeks drafting and completing his masterpiece. But it turns out to be an ill-fated accomplishment, as another artist, perhaps jealous, decides with a malicious heart to destroy the masterpiece. He takes a knife and slashes the canvas until it is unrecognizable. Is there any doubt that this is a morally reprehensible act for the grief and loss he has caused the other artist?

Morality would be only one of his concerns, as the legal ramifications would certainly follow him as well! Now, in Minecraft, that same thing happens all the time when players are involved in "griefing." One might spend weeks working on a piece of art—your game canvas—investing time, energy, even emotion, only to be devastated when another player dismantles and destroys it in a matter of minutes.

How do we react to this? How should we react? Given this scenario, it's unlikely that we would still say, "It's just a game!" when we see the frustration and sadness of the player who bears the grief. There may not be any legal ramifications, but shouldn't we follow God's law in the digital world even as we do in the real world?

Still (some will say), the game can't be blamed for this, right? Indeed, this kind of act can take place in many games of many genres. Even knowing this, we have generally given mostly positive reviews about the game. In fact, we have also seen gamers use it quite creatively as a tool for an online Minecraft Bible study and to present the gospel to teenagers, and Apolomedia resources were even handed out at this year's MineCon (Minecraft Convention).

WHAT ABOUT GOD IN MINECRAFT?

However, one of our gaming friends came up to us after a presentation and pointed out that we had missed the most important part about Minecraft when it comes to spiritual matters! He sent a link to the "ending" of the game. What we saw there was mind blowing and changed our entire understanding of Minecraft.

A person could produce an entire documentary on the 8-minute ending scene of this game. In essence, it is an 8-minute wall of New Age teaching that seemingly comes out of nowhere and certainly flies in the face of a biblical perspective on God and the created universe. *This is a significant place to not only recognize the challenge but to get the answers and know how to go back to the Bible to find truth.*

Look at these statements with which the player is "rewarded" upon completing the game: (It should be noted that many players are frustrated at being forced to read all of this text for 8 minutes, regardless of religious beliefs.)

"and the universe said I love you"

"and the universe said you have played the game well"

"and the universe said everything you need is within you"

"and the universe said you are stronger than you know"

"and the universe said the light you seek is within you"

"and the universe said you are not alone"

"and the universe said you are not separate from every other thing"

"and the universe said I love you because you are love"

"And the game was over and the player woke up from the dream. And the player began a new dream. And the player dreamed again, dreamed better. And the player was the universe. And the player was love."

You are the player. Wake up"

If it isn't clear yet, the game is essentially telling the player *"You are god."*

"The player is the universe. And the player is love." After all the hours of mining, all the hours of building, all the hours of someone else asking, "Can I use the computer yet?"—the culmination of your effort is meant to be the realization that *you are the godlike universe.*

All this from a blank canvas, infinite Lego-set game! Just imagine what else is out there in games where the plot and characters take center stage! Believe it or not, we don't say this all to scare you, though if it shocks you into action, then we believe our mission is accomplished!

WHAT DO I DO?

Determining what action to take as a parent is up to you. You have to answer the question: "What about Minecraft?" We see three main options for the way people usually respond:

Response 1: *Play no more.* "I don't want to let my children play these games anymore, because I don't want to support these messages. There is a much more God-honoring way to spend my money and my time."

Response 2: *Play with your eyes wide open.* "Thank you for letting us know what is in these games. I am going to sit down with my children and have a Bible study with them. I want to make sure they know the truth so they are prepared next time a message like this is thrown at them."

Response 3: *Just Play.* "It's just a game. Stop making a big deal out of it."

We won't tell you which one to choose, but let us just challenge you with this... *don't be the person in Response 3.* Instead, take the opportunity to get into God's Word. Whatever decision you make, as an individual or as a family, make it prayerfully. Find real answers, and share those answers with the world around you! The chances are good that you know more than one person who plays Minecraft. This could be a great opportunity to start a spiritual conversation on a topic they already care about! We live in a world that has many dark places in desperate need of light. And we need to be the ones to shine it.

If we become bold in our faith and confident in the Bible, we have a chance to speak the truth of God's Word to a whole culture of gamers who may be getting their only spiritual messages from games. And that is a big deal!

[TBC: The ending philosophy of Minecraft was written by Julian Gough with full approval of Markus Persson, the game's creator. Gough notes, "...by the end of it I actually felt like I was taking dictation from the universe. Now, I'm sure there are many ways of interpreting that experience that don't require cosmic voices from unknown entities to be talking to each other, but it actually did feel like I was taking dictation. So perhaps it is real wisdom in the story, who knows?"](1)

As a huge fan of Joseph Campbell, the man who inspired the creation of the religion of The Force in the Star Wars series, Gough sees the same potential for video games: "I think computer games can serve the function of religion. They can do the good bits that religion used to do, and hopefully not do the bad bits..."(2)

Obviously, the religion Gough promotes, and that is influencing and seducing millions of Minecraft players, is Eastern Mysticism (Hinduism, Pantheism, Panentheism), not biblical Christianity.]

(1) (2) <http://boingboing.net/2012/01/09/ending-an-endless-game-an-int.html>

NEW! IT'S NOT JUST A GAME PAPERBACK BOOK AND DVD



It's Not Just a Game: How Parents and Gamers Can Apply God's Word to Video Games

Kerby/Thorwall—Can a game carry a spiritual message? What do video games have to say about God? The Bible? The Devil? And even Jesus? Isn't it just a game? It's NOT just a game! From cell phones to the latest systems, video games have become a part of our daily lives, but many of us do not realize the messages that may be packaged with one of our favorite pastimes. Lifelong gamers Carl Kerby, Jr. and Drew Thorwall take a unique approach to more than 70 video games and systems by breaking down the messages within from a biblical perspective. They want

to teach parents and gamers *how* to think, not *what* to think. Get equipped to answer the challenges to God's Word and turn them into opportunities for spiritual conversations with other gamers! Dig deeper into some of the most popular video games to answer challenges like: *Does the Bible contradict itself?* • *Can the Bible be trusted?* • *Is every religion the same?* • *Does God make mistakes?* • *Are we really made from monkeys?* • *Does God hear our prayers?* • *And many more!* Also includes tips for parents for safe online play! This book will show you the spiritual content in games and give you the tools to stand up and say it's NOT just a game! Apolomedia, 142 pp.

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NEW! TBC CONFERENCE SPEAKER - CARL KERBY, JR.



CARL KERBY, JR.

Carl Kerby, Jr. founded Apolomedia with Drew Thorwall and is a high impact nationwide speaker and radio guest. He has a BA in Media Studies and a passion for teaching parents and reaching gamers. He and his wife, Tish, are blessed with two children. He also serves as a youth pastor at Crittenden Baptist

Church where he uses media to challenge Christ-followers to own their faith and to encourage seekers to consider the truth of the Bible.



Remember, the conference is **FREE** but pre-registration is required. Sign up as soon as possible to help us prepare for this year's event.

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**CALLING: 1-800-937-6638 -OR- GO ONLINE AT:
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Biblically Handling Technology and Social Media

Various—Technology-based systems now dominate 21st century society. Smartphones, iPods, and social media are a major part of our lives. While these technology innovations are not bad in and of themselves and have useful purposes, they can have a negative influence on our lives if our use of them is not guided by biblical principles. We are to be in the world but not of the world: "And be not conformed to this world" (Romans:12:2). If we use things the world has deemed popular or cultural, then we need to guard ourselves against copying the way the world uses them. This booklet presents specific Scriptures to help guide Christians in their use of technology-based systems so that they can recognize how to better glorify the Lord and walk worthy of Him (Colossians:1:10). Biblical Discipleship Publications, 69 pp. Retail \$5.99

B17366 2 or more just \$4.00 each! wt .3 **\$5.00**



Remote Control

Kerby—How many of us understand the pervasiveness of the evolutionary philosophy that runs through movies, television, and books? Reasons for Hope speaker Carl Kerby has researched the impact of evolution on entertainment for more than a decade and challenges audiences everywhere to understand and guard against the faith-challenging messages that permeate today's entertainment. Children and teens are fascinated by the examples that Kerby illustrates. Also excellent for youth pastors, the parents of your children's friends, grandparents, and others. Master Books, 125 pp. Retail \$9.99

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SALE! WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HEAVEN? SAVE \$10 ON THE BOOK



Whatever Happened to Heaven?

Hunt—More than two decades after the original printing of this book, Dave Hunt's insights are clearer than ever! During the 1970s when *The Late, Great Planet Earth* was outselling everything, the Rapture was the hot topic. Pastors preached about heaven, and Christians eagerly anticipated being taken up at any moment to meet their Lord in the air. When Christ didn't return, and the 40 years since the establishment of a new Israel in 1948 expired without the fulfillment of prophesied events, disillusionment began to set in. Today, a growing number of Christians are exchanging the hope of the Rapture for a "new" hope—that Christians can clean up society and elect their own candidates to political office to make this world a "heaven on earth." Bestselling author Dave Hunt thoroughly probes the question "Whatever happened to heaven?" and provides an easily understandable explanation of all the many issues and beliefs. Hunt shows us that heaven really is our home and brings fascinating new clarity to why we lost that hope and how it can be regained. The Berean Call, 327 pp.

B60705

Retail \$17.99, TBC Reg. \$17.50 — Save \$3.99 off retail!

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TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT WHAT THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT HEAVEN AND THE END TIMES



Heaven Awaits

Moody—D. L. Moody has given us much food for thought in this short but blessed contemplation of heaven, bringing out a handful of Scriptures that give us a look into that glorious place—the home of all the redeemed. It is good that our hearts be turned there, and that we should "look up, and lift up [our] heads; for [our] redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). "The moment a person becomes heavenly minded and gets his heart and affections on things above, then life becomes beautiful. The light of heaven shines across our pathway...." Whitaker House, 159 pp. Retail \$6.99

B00364

wt .2 **\$6.00**



Worlds Apart

MacDonald—Biblical insights into the battlefield where two kingdoms vie for loyalties. There is the kingdom which the Bible calls "the world" and there is the kingdom of God—they are worlds apart. *Worlds*

Apart is a battle plan calling the church to action. With the author we tour the battlefield, inspect the armory, meet the combatants, and learn the strategies for victory. William MacDonald speaks plainly about the key issues of Christianity. He has written more than eighty books, many of which have been translated into scores of languages. His Bible teaching ministry has encompassed the globe. Gospel Folio Press, 101 pp. Retail \$8.99

B01054

wt .3 **\$8.00**



One Thing You Can't Do in Heaven

Cahill—Are you ready for eternity? If so, are you helping others to get ready for that journey into eternity that each of us must take? As believers, we all know that we should tell others about the Lord, but we often don't know how. This practical audiobook will give you ideas for starting conversations, examples of witnessing situations, and answers to common questions, to help encourage, challenge, and equip you to reach both friends and strangers for Jesus! Read by the author, the MP3 disc also includes a bonus track, "It's Not Blind Faith." 5 hrs., plus bonus track. Retail \$15.99

MP3162

1 MP3 CD

wt .1 **\$15.00**



Jesus the Way: The Child's Guide to Heaven

Hammond—Edward Payson Hammond spent much of his life and ministry traveling the world to preach the Gospel, with a special emphasis upon children. This volume will capture the attention of the youngest children as Hammond relates his experience of first entering his journey to the city of Jerusalem. Each of the first four chapters is a moving appeal to children to turn from sin to trust the Savior of sinners. The final chapter is addressed to those who have come to saving faith in Christ. Solid Ground Christian Books, 108 pp. For ages 6-12. Retail \$11.99

B50359

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Little Pilgrim's Progress

Bunyan/Taylor—The anniversary edition of *Little Pilgrim's Progress* contains the best of the many illustrations used to depict the highs and lows of the Christian journey through life and the ultimate reward: eternity with Christ. This profound allegory will delight children ages 8 to 12, providing spiritually rich reading they will adore and long remember. Moody Publishers, 323 pp. Retail \$9.99

B49263

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Countdown to the Second Coming

Hunt—At last—a book that presents, in concise form, the events leading up to the return of Christ. Dave Hunt, in his characteristic direct style, answers these pervasive questions: Who is the Antichrist? How will he be recognized? What current events indicate that we really are in the last of the "last days"? For those who seek to understand the times from a biblical perspective, this little volume provides a concise summary of historic and current world events that will excite, encourage, and equip God's people to boldly proclaim the Gospel to this generation. With clarity and conviction, Dave dispels popular distortions of the Last Days, and demonstrates how believers can minister effectively without fear or anxiety, "redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15-16). The Berean Call, 95 pp. Retail \$12.99

B00193

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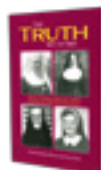
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George Müller of Bristol

Pierson—This classic biography tells of George Müller's dependence on prayer and how his compassionate concern for the orphans in his hometown of Bristol, England, shaped decades of missionary and social endeavors throughout the world. Hendrickson Publishers, 466 pp. Retail \$17.95

B62521 wt 1.7 **SALE \$12.50**



The Truth Set Us Free

Bennett/Hertel—The stories of twenty women who became Roman Catholic nuns as a means to serve God—but left the Church. Their testimonies are intensely personal and wonderfully down-to-earth examples of God's faithfulness to the true seeker! Solid Ground, 237 pp. Retail \$12.99

B00678 wt .8 **SALE \$9.00**



Unless You Repent

Ironsides—There is an effort today to redefine repentance, denying the biblical definition. This book deals with issues that are the subject of some modern misinformation. Dr. Ironsides's gracious handling of this important subject comes as a breath of fresh air, dispelling the fog. Gospel Folio, 160 pp. Retail \$13.99

B02277 wt .2 **SALE \$9.50**



The Other Side of the River

Reeves—A compelling and deeply personal account of a young man's spiritual plunge into a movement called the "River." Sometimes referred to as the River Revival, the Third Wave, or the Latter Rain, this movement is marked by bizarre manifestations, false prophecies and, esoteric revelations. Light-house Trails Publishing, 229 pp. Retail \$12.95

B03150 wt .8 **SALE \$9.00**



Andrew Murray on Prayer

Murray—Do you desire an exciting relationship with Christ? In this dynamic book, Andrew Murray explains biblical guidelines for effective, vital communication with God. Discover essential keys to developing a vibrant prayer life. Whitaker House, 656 pp. Retail \$18.99

B97920 wt 2.1 **SALE \$13.00**



The Answers Book for Kids Vol 2

Ham—The new Answers Book for Kids series is a unique collection from Ken Ham and the creative team at Answers in Genesis. This book examines what the Bible says about dinosaurs, the ark, the flood, and much more! Ages 5-11. Master Books, 48 pp. Retail \$7.99

B05273 wt .4 **SALE \$5.50**



A Pocket Guide to Dinosaurs

Various—What really happened to the dinosaurs? Did they live and then die out millions of years ago? Or have they lived recently, alongside man? Did dinosaurs evolve into birds? Are there dinosaurs alive today? This handy booklet answers these questions and more! Answers in Genesis, 95 pp. Retail \$5.99

B08002 wt .2 **SALE \$4.00**



What Every Mormon Should Ask

Cowan—How can we find assurance that our lives are in line with the Gospel? Author Marvin Cowan shares from his own experience in the Mormon Church. Utah Christian Publications, 32 pp. Retail \$3.99

B02317 wt .3 **SALE \$2.75**



The Christian Home

Campbell—The Christian home is under attack today more than ever before. Can we protect our homes and make them honoring to God? R. K. Campbell thinks so, and gives the reader a biblically based look at such topics as: characteristics of the Christian home, the importance of marrying in the Lord, the roles of husbands and wives, headship in the family, and more! Believer's Bookshelf, 82 pp. Retail \$9.95

B20068 wt .2 **SALE \$6.50**



Israel, Islam & the Vatican

Proclaiming the Gospel—Video presentations by Mike Gendron, with PowerPoint. See how these three monotheistic religions are influencing the events leading to Armageddon. Also see why we must contend for truth in these days of great deception and compromise. 94 min. Retail \$25.99.

DVD092 wt .2 **SALE \$18.00**



The New Answers DVD 3

Answers in Genesis—You'll love these highly stylized mini-interviews, featuring authors from the best-selling, same-titled, book, as they respond to numerous questions including *Was There Death Before Adam Sinned?*, *Doesn't the Bible Support Slavery?*, *Unicorns in the Bible?*, and more! 72 min. Retail \$14.99

DVD306 wt .3 **SALE \$10.50**



The "Bottom Strip"

Answers in Genesis—Carl Kerby draws audiences to the issues of the heart unlike any other speaker! In this life-changing DVD that relates stories from his colorful past, the former air traffic controller explains the importance of following the "bottom strip" if you are to succeed in living a life of purpose and honor to the Creator. 49 min. Retail \$12.99

DVD196 wt .2 **SALE \$9.00**



Agenda: Grinding America Down

Curtis Bowers—Ask almost anyone and you'll hear, "Communism is dead!" Though the word communism is rarely used these days, this film will show that the ideas behind it are alive and well. Join Bowers for a fascinating look at the people and groups that have targeted America's morality and freedom. 93 min. Retail \$18.00

DVD314 wt .3 **SALE \$12.50**



Indoctrination

Gunn Productions—A home-school father takes his family on a cross-country "field trip" to interview pastors, teachers, parents, students, and Christian administrators about their experiences with public education. Revealing insights that will spark long-overdue discussion of how believers should train up their children in these increasingly perilous times. 108 min. Retail \$19.95

DVD315 wt .3 **SALE \$13.50**



Hell's Best Kept Secret

Living Waters—Why do 80-90 percent of those making a decision for Christ fall away from the faith? What is the principle that Spurgeon, Wesley, Whitefield, and others used to reach the lost? Why has the church neglected it? This video provides the answers. 38 min. Retail \$15.00

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Bible Survival

The Berean Call—Originally produced for online distribution and viewing via YouTube and other video-sharing websites, the first ten episodes of *Bible Survival!* with T. A. McMahon are now available on DVD. Berean-minded believers and seekers of truth will appreciate these 3- to 5-minute "discussion starters" for personal, family, or small group reflection. Filmed in locations all over Central Oregon, the Pacific Coast, and wherever Tom has traveled, viewers will be treated to object lessons and exhortation from the Scriptures, often set against dramatic backdrops of God's creation. These simple teachings are suited for believers young and old, and will even challenge and encourage those outside the fold to turn to God's Word for answers and understanding. About 45 minutes. (Note: video quality is internet resolution.) TBC, Retail \$12.99. **DVD is FREE with purchase of Waterproof Bible (see left).**

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