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ABOUT THE BEREAN CALL

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

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

- EXHORT believers to give greater heed to biblical discernment and truth regarding teachings and practices being currently promoted in the church
- SUPPLY believers with teaching, information, and materials that will encourage the love of God's truth, and assist in the development of biblical discernment
- MOBILIZE believers in Christ to action in obedience to the scriptural command to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3)

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

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The Berean Call

Founder: Dave Hunt Executive Director: T. A. McMahon

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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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Understanding the Times Survey

T. A. McMahon

"And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times...."

-1 Chronicles 12:32

As many of you know who subscribe to this newsletter, one important objective of The Berean Call is to help equip the upcoming generation of believers so that they might be steadfast and fruitful in the faith. We believe that to be biblically steadfast, a believer must have the ability to discern truth from error as he or she begins to understand and live out the teachings and practices given in Scripture.

Foundational to biblical steadfastness is a love for and diligence in studying God's Word. Without that foundation, a believer will lean upon his own ideas about what is true. Proverbs warns us about this because although it may seem right it will inevitably separate us from the truth of Scripture (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). So all of us, young or old, mature or new to the faith, who profess to know Christ and desire to follow Him, cannot do that very thing unless we know what constitutes following Him. Jesus made that quite clear in John 8:31-32: "... If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." God's Word, which is the truth, reveals His instructions for life.

We can only understand the times in which we live by heeding the warnings given in Scripture by our omniscient God who alone knows the future. We are told that as the days draw near to the return of Jesus Christ, evil will increase in the world, a situation that will also manifest itself in Christendom. Who could deny that reality today? We are told that evil will escalate in preparation for the development of the religion and the kingdom of the Antichrist. Jesus characterized such times with the warning that we are to "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall *deceive many*" (Matthew 24:4-5).

Until the Lord removes the church in the Rapture, all who follow Christ will be subjected to increasing deception. Believers will find themselves confronting mounting pressures that will challenge their steadfastness in the faith. There will be tremendous persecutions and treacherous seductions that will constitute what Scripture declares is the end-times apostasy. This is made abundantly clear in Scripture.

The Bible also gives the underlying reason why the church will be, perhaps even to a great degree, affected by the deception and seduction of the apostasy-because the church itself will turn from the Word of God: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4). "... Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). It seems that Jude changed the direction of what he had originally intended to write as the Holy Spirit moved him to deliver a warning to the church regarding impending deception: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 3-4). The Apostle Paul gave a similar warning in Acts 20:28-31: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Paul notes that the "latter times" seduction will involve "seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils": "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; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

Those are just a few of the verses that indicate what lies ahead, and it's certainly not going to be a walk in the park. The world is being prepared for God's judgment. God told Abram that He would give his descendants the Promised Land—but not just yet. They were to wait until the "iniquity of the Amorites" (i.e., those occupying the land) would reach the point (400 years later) when their sins were "full." At that time, God would use Israel to judge them. Similarly, the world, under the power of the god of this world (Satan), is progressively being prepared by him to follow the Antichrist and will, at the apex of its iniquity, reap God's judgment.

Is there any good news in that scenario? Absolutely! The Lord will return for all true believers in Him prior to the Tribulation to take them to heaven. Not so, however, for those who reject Christ. Their rebellion will cause them to suffer the wrath of God in a tribulation never before experienced by mankind. Should the Lord tarry regarding His return for His bride in the Rapture, and as the apostasy increases, the born-again believer will be faced with increasing seductions, persecutions, and even martyrdom. Christians in the West, who haven't experienced these extremes before, will likely face moral and financial testing of their faith that may be more difficult to endure than even the threat of persecution and death. So, where's the good news in this prior to the Rapture?

Scripture tells us "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20). Jesus supplies that grace, which He told Paul was sufficient for his trial. He also said that He will never leave us nor forsake us. Additionally, every believer has been sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30), the One who equips and enables us to be steadfast in the faith. The Holy Spirit is also called the Comforter, which, in the context of John 14-16 means "one who strengthens." So all of this and a great deal more God has provided for every trial of life. But there is a condition for receiving what God has provided. Our hearts must be willing to diligently study God's Word both to learn of it and to obey it.

We are at a time in history in which we find the greatest number of Bibles ever available, yet biblical illiteracy is rampant. According to Scripture, we can expect that collectively. Yet, every individual believer has the opportunity to receive what God has provided in His Word in order that he or she might be strengthened in the faith. This is God's "spiritual prevention program" in the face of rising apostasy, and it is a message that we must send to the upcoming generation. **TBC** THIS SURVEY was designed for believers 20 to 35 years old. Although it was created for TBC's use, it may prove valuable for church leaders, parents and grandparents, and others who want to have a better understanding of and more effective communication with the upcoming generation. We hope that you will help us by copying and handing this survey out to groups, and then collecting and sending it to TBC. The survey can be filled in and faxed, mailed, or scanned and emailed to us. To make it even easier, the survey is available on TBC's website or by scanning the QR-code below. We greatly appreciate your help with this.

UNDERSTANDING	THE TIMES	SURVEY
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• What is your age?

□ 20 - 35 □ 36 - 50 □ Over 50

- How much time do you spend studying the Bible during a week?
- How often do you pray during the week?
- Are you involved in a Christian fellowship or Bible study?
- How long have you been a Christian?
- Have you ever had instruction in how to study the Bible?
- Do you consider the Bible to be your authority for living the Christian life?
- Do you believe the Bible is sufficient for living a godly life?
- Have you had instruction in apologetics or biblical discernment?

- What Christian authors do you enjoy reading?
- What Christian leaders have influenced your life?
- What Christian music groups or artists influence your life?
- What Christian websites or publications do you follow?
- Can you name any well-known Christians that you consider to be false teachers or false prophets?
- What issues do you believe the church needs to address?
- Have you had teachings about creation versus evolution?
- What qualifies a person for heaven?
- 🗆 Only Faith in Jesus 🛛 Good Works 🖓 Faith in Jesus Plus Good Works



TAKE THE SURVEY ONLINE!

Go to: www.thebereancall.org/survey - or scan the QR-code to the left with your "smart device" and be directed to the survey page automatically!

5

Quotable.....

Isn't that encouraging? That's what we're to encourage one another with—our blessed hope! Yes, we can talk about Israel; we can talk about the antichrist, the tribulation, and everything that's wrong, but let's keep in focus our blessed hope, which the Lord, by His Spirit, has placed within our hearts.

—Paul Wilkinson, 2014 TBC Conference, "When the Trumpet Call Shall Sound"

Q&A.....

OUESTION: I was reading today's Apples of Gold, and it was talking about the difference between the Israelites killing the inhabitants of Canaan versus those who believe that their "god" tells them to do the same. Here's my question: a quote from the entry is, "...the Lord gave the inhabitants of Canaan more than 400 years to repent, but He eventually came to the point where He had to stop the unending sacrifice of infants and institutional outpouring of blood." But if the reason for God's judgment on the people group was the sacrifice of infants, why did He not have the Israelites save the babies? Why were they commanded to kill them, as well? I understand that the babies went straight to heaven, but considering that little children don't have the capacity to understand good and evil, why did the Lord not have the Israelites just adopt the children and raise them with the knowledge of the true God instead of totally wiping the people group out?

RESPONSE: You bring up a good point that clearly shows the need for further elaboration concerning the sins of Canaan. Their sacrifice of infants was just one sin that was endemic in their culture. The Bible is explicit concerning the sins of the Canaanites, which included idolatry, incest, adultery, child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality.

Consequently, the Lord's judgment was to execute these people. One commentator notes, "Israel's response to Canaanite sin is a parable of how their own sinfulness empowered them to ape the sin of the Canaanites and thereby procure God's judgment on them. For God does not show favoritism. Israel was warned not to let the Canaanites live in their land, but to completely destroy them (Ex 23:33; Dt 20:16–18), lest the Israelites learn the Canaanite ways (Ex 34:15–16). If they did not destroy them, the land would 'vomit' them out just as it had vomited out the Canaanites (Nm 33:56; Lv 18:28; Dt 4:23–29, 8:19–20)" (http://www.equip. org/articles/killing-the-canaanites/).

Regarding the little children, we have a difficult point to recognize. The part that is hard to comprehend is how a culture of death is inculcated into the very young. We have a glimpse of a modern culture in which that is happening in the case of the Palestinians. Here is a group of people who are literally taught from birth to kill Jews. The footage of children's television programs with Muppet-like puppets wearing explosive belts and singing songs about rivers of blood and slaughtering Jews (men. women. and children) is hard to view. The images of the Palestinian crowd literally tearing two Israeli soldiers to pieces with their bare hands is an evil hard to comprehend.

And, considering the evidence of the sin of the Canaanites, it is understandable that even many young children would have already been corrupted. Consequently, if God wanted to remove their wickedness from the Promised Land, He couldn't allow them to grow up following the example of their birth parents, which they had already witnessed.

Little children may not fully understand good and evil, but they clearly still can be influenced, and these early influences apart from the grace of God will certainly emerge as they mature. Deuteronomy 20:16-18, "But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ve sin against the LORD your God."

The bottom line for those who know the Lord is not the "why" but the "what" of that which God does. He rarely tells us the "why" nor does He accommodate what anyone thinks or feels. He does things that are consistent with His character, which is perfectly righteous. What He does is confirmed by His righteousness and His love by His going to the cross and paying for the sins of every man, woman, and child.

QUESTION: I'm very troubled every time I get an email from the Berean Call. Your opinion of the interview/event/article is never mentioned at the beginning of the email so we never know from what angle it is presented to us. Take, for example, the Daily Update regarding the Catholics trying to globalize the entire Christian world. That is bad. The pope has been an antichrist from the onset. Where's the Berean Call's statement thereof? It doesn't show up until after all the liars are quoted and their wonderful adjectives and superlatives are presented to the reader. I am troubled because I see the Berean Call slipping away from true biblical Christianity. I may be unsubscribing soon, but I will wait to see how you respond.

RESPONSE: We do know that whenever we excerpt an article from another source, there is the danger that the information will be misunderstood. One of the principles that we have operated under from the very beginning of this ministry is that we are not seeking to become the "Bible Answer Men" for people but rather to "exhort believers to give greater heed to biblical discernment and truth regarding teachings and practices being currently promoted in the church."

In short, if we have taught people to ask "what does the Berean Call say?" we have in essence failed by encouraging them to lean upon us and not upon the Scriptures. Nevertheless, our stand against the errors of Catholicism and our concern for evangelicals who are being led astray by ecumenicalism have never changed. We are troubled by your statements, particularly when we state very clearly at the end of the excerpt that you mentioned: "TBC: Rome has consistently stated that it has never changed. Consequently, only the 'evangelicals' have compromised their position. In the hope of sharing 'love' to a 'hurting world,' we must first of all share the biblical gospel-something denied by Catholicism with its gospel of works."

It is also difficult to respond to statements such as "I'm very troubled every time I get an email from the Berean Call.' Every time? Or, "Where's the Berean Call's statement?" Well, it is there. We always appreciated Dave's refusal to tell people what to think. The world tells people what to think, but we are not of the world. Dave wrote quite clearly about his position on many issues; on others, he has not. He didn't want to be anyone's "spiritual guru," and our aim is definitely to help individual believers grow in personal discernment, for ultimately we will each be accountable before God for our position on matters. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom 14:5).

Finally, Acts 17:11 clarifies our position on this: "[The Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." We encourage our readers to follow that example.



Who Could Believe the Bible's Miracles?

QUESTION: It seems to me that the strongest case against the Bible is the miracles it describes. These are so fantastic as to render whatever else the Bible says unreliable. As Reinhold Seeberg said, "Miracle was once the foundation of all apologetics, then it became an apologetic crutch, and today it is . . . a cross for apologetics to bear." Obviously the Bible was written by very gullible and superstitious men for whom fantasy was normal and who were therefore not embarrassed by telling about alleged miracles. How can you possibly trust a book that presents such obviously fictitious tales, especially when modern science has proven that miracles don't happen?

RESPONSE: On the contrary, not only has science never "proven that miracles don't happen," but such proof would be categorically impossible, since science deals only with natural phenomena. Of course miracles don't happen *naturally* or in *nature*. A miracle, by very definition, is *supernatural*. It defies all physical laws or it wouldn't be a miracle in the first place. A miracle must be beyond the ability of science to explain, and thus it is also beyond the ability of science to disprove.

Consequently, there is no valid scientific or logical basis for saying that miracles can't occur precisely as the Bible describes them. To insist upon such a position betrays a prejudice that in itself prevents one from facing the abundant evidence in favor of miracles. When Albert Einstein was asked what effect his theory of relativity would have upon religion he bluntly replied, "None. Relativity is a purely scientific theory and has nothing to do with religion."

Miracles are impossible only if the universe is a closed system and all there is. In that case, of course, whatever happens must be a natural occurrence functioning according to the laws that govern the universe. The famous evolutionist and atheist Thomas H. Huxley "proved" that miracles couldn't happen by defining "nature" as "that which is; the sum of the phenomena presented to our experience; the totality of events, past, present, and to come." For all of his claim to honor evidence and logic, however, Huxley gives not one piece of evidence or reason to support this assertion. He simply does away with miracles by setting rules that make them impossible, which is like proving atheism by declaring that God by very definition doesn't exist. Miracles would be impossible in pantheism, as well, because in that belief system nature is everything.

However, if God, the infinite and transcendent Creator of the universe, exists as separate and distinct from His creation, then miracles are possible. Indeed, they are *inevitable* if God is to intervene at all in the downward course of human affairs and of nature. Whenever God reaches in from outside to effect anything that is not according to the normal course of events (such as salvation or raising the dead), it is a miracle. So if you believe in God, you believe in miracles.

Christianity Alone Requires Miracles

Christianity isn't embarrassed by the recital of miracles in the Bible. On the contrary, Christianity is based upon the greatest miracle of all, the resurrection of Christ. Unlike Muhammad, Buddha, Confucius, or any other religious leader, none of whom even dared to make such a claim, Jesus said He would rise from the dead. If He didn't, He is a liar and Christianity is a fraud. Listen to Paul's testimony:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel... how that Christ died for our sins... that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day... and that he was seen of Cephas [Peter], then of the twelve....

And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ.... (1 Corinthians 15:1, 3–5, 14, 15)

Christianity doesn't apologize for miracles or back away and shrug its shoulders as though it isn't really important whether miracles happen or not. Christianity *requires* miracles. This is not the case with Buddhism or Hinduism or Islam or any other of the world's religions, which get along quite well without miracles. Their leaders left a philosophy of life and certain rules to follow that have no bearing upon whether Buddha, Krishna, Muhammad, et al., are alive or dead or even lived at all. Not so with Christianity.

The Christian faith stands or falls upon the sinless life, the sacrificial death, and the miraculous resurrection of Jesus Christ—and all other miracles are minor occurrences in comparison to that one. If the resurrection actually happened, then for God to open blind eyes, heal any illness, make the lame walk, or even to open the Red Sea is obviously within the realm of possibility.

Testimony That Stands the Severest Tests

As for the specious claim that those who recorded the miracles were so simple and ignorant that they thought such things were normal, the evidence is all to the contrary. The disciples were frightened when they saw Christ walking on water (Matthew 14:26). They were fearful of Him, wondering what kind of person He was, when He calmed the storm with a word (Mark 4:41). Thinking they had seen a ghost, they were terrified when He stood in their midst alive after His resurrection (Luke 24:37). In fact, they were so skeptical that He had to prove to them that it was really He!

This was not the behavior of gullible persons who lived in a fantasy world. On the contrary, the disciples had a very clear grasp of what was normal and were frightened by Christ's miracles, which suddenly shattered their world. We hear the ring of truth in their accounts of these events as they confess their fear and unbelief.

We will consider the specific evidence for the resurrection in a later chapter. At this point, however, let us quote some of the world's foremost experts on evidence, experts who were convinced of the resurrection of Jesus Christ precisely on the basis of the evidence. Lord Lyndhurst, recognized as one of the greatest legal minds in British history, declared: "I know pretty well what evidence is; and I tell you, such evidence as that for the Resurrection has never broken down yet." Simon Greenleaf, America's foremost authority on legal evidence during his lifetime, came to the same conclusion, as did Sir Robert Anderson, head of the Criminal Investigation Division of Scotland Yard, plus scores of others whom we have insufficient space to name. Professor Thomas Arnold, who held the chair of Modern History at Oxford, wrote:

> I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead.

Many a youthful seeker has been swept into unbelief by the contemptuous declarations of liberal clergy or university professors, delivered with the finality of superior wisdom, that "no intelligent person believes in the miracles in the Bible, much less in the resurrection!" But in fact nothing could be further from the truth. The few statements above should be enough to counter such misinformation. Indeed, many of the most humble and earnest Christians have been the most brilliant, the most knowledgeable, and the best qualified to examine and evaluate the evidence that we will be considering carefully.

- An excerpt from IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH (PP. 85-88) by DAVE HUNT



In Defense of the Faith

Hunt—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. The Berean Call, 373 pp.

TBC NewsWatch

DEFENDING EVOLUTION AGAINST CREATION BULLYING

CHRISTIANNEWS.NET, 7/28/14, "CAMP TEACHES KIDS HOW TO DEFEND EVOLU-TION AGAINST CREATION 'BULLYING'" [Excerpts]: A Unitarian organization in Missouri hosted an evolution camp for kids earlier this month, during which the kids were taught how to defend evolutionary theory from critics, including Christians.

During the camp, the children were taught the basic tenets of the evolutionary worldview.

"I am the universe," one of the camp's Unitarian organizers, Jennifer Lara, recited to the kids. "Like you, I started as a speck about 13 billion years ago...."

"It's awe-inspiring, an amazing thing, how the earth came together," Lara told reporters. "We can just enjoy the beauty of the science."

According to Lara, evolution is "a touchy subject," but she believes it is important to teach children how to defend their belief in evolution. Moreover, Lara criticized the creation worldview, saying it "can be used to bully other kids."

Unitarians were not the only ones participating in the evolution camp. Brandy Clory, who brought her 5-year-old son to the camp [said] "I wanted him to have experiences with other children learning science and be around openminded children,"

Though Clory says she and her son attend a Christian church, she wants her son to be "exposed" to the evolutionary theory from a young age.

"I want him to grow up knowing both paths so he can make his own decisions," she explained. "My job is to expose him."

However, others who learned of the program were less enthusiastic, warning of the dangerous doctrines behind evolution and Unitarian Universalism. Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis described the Unitarian group as "a secular (anti-Christian) institution."

"Secularists...want to indoctrinate children in their worldview of atheism and they are some of the most intolerant people around," Ham wrote in a recent blog post. "They only tolerate the views of people they agree with, and they really become intolerant not just of Christian views, but of Christians themselves!"

"Exposing the children to multiple views (except those of Christians) and training them to supposedly be open-minded so that they can decide for themselves seem to be a common theme these days," he added. "There has been an intense attempt to indoctrinate people in evolution through the education system and the media (and sadly through compromising churches)."

(http://goo.gl/3zDtQa)

MUSLIM VENGEANCE MURDERS IN USA

CHRISTIANHEADLINES.COM, 8/22/14, "MUS-LIM MAN CHARGED FOR FOUR MURDERS IN WASHINGTON AND NEW JERSEY FOR 'VEN-GEANCE'" [EXCERPTS]: A Muslim man has been charged with four murders in New Jersey and Washington. Ali Muhamad Brown, 29, claims he committed the murders to avenge the US military operations in the Middle East.

Brown said, "My mission is vengeance for the lives, millions of lives [that] are lost every day. Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan—all these places where innocent lives are being taken every single day...by America, by this government. So a life for a life."

Brown killed Leroy Henderson in Washington in April. Brown then committed two more murders in Washington, killing Ahmed Said and Dwone Anderson-Young on June 1st. Brown ended his killing spree in New Jersey with the murder of Brendan Tevlin on July 25.

King County prosecutor Dan Satterberg said, "The defendant was on a bloody crusade, executing four innocent men... with the same murder weapon, over the course of approximately two months, and all under the common and single scheme of exacting 'vengeance' against United States [foreign policies.]"

(http://goo.gl/b6hfW9)

DETHRONING CELEBRITY PASTORS

CHRISTIANITY.COM, 8/15/14, "DETHRONING **CELEBRITY PASTORS**" [EXCERPTS]: The "celebrity pastor" is now a thing. Maybe it's always been a thing (1 Cor. 1:10-17), but over the past few years it has become a source of concern and consternation for many. On the one hand I do see a problem, and on the other hand I can't help but feel that some speak against popular preachers out of a sense of jealousy. I do not think that a pastor whose "platform" is large, influence is broad, and following is numerous is a celebrity pastor. At least, not in a bad way. The real problem is leadership that loses sight of the glory of Christ and focuses on the glory of man. Or. at least one man.

But Celebrity Pastors do not simply build themselves. They are built with the help of fans. It's not wrong or idolatrous to get a photo with a person you admire. Nor is it dangerous to love the preaching or teaching of a particular leader. But at some point admiration turns into allegiance, and allegiance gives birth to adoration, and adoration, when it is full grown, produces idolatry. I am not sure exactly when the line is crossed—maybe when we start asking well-known pastors to sign our Bibles. Maybe. But the line is well behind us when a leader's word is more valuable to us than God's word and when they become our authority.

(http://goo.gl/WkARiK)

PSYCHOLOGY: CHRISTIANS DUMBER THAN ATHEISTS

CHRISTIANNEWS.NET, 7/28, "OHIO STATE PSYCHOLOGY COURSE TEACHES CHRISTIANS ARE DUMBER THAN ATHEISTS "[EXCERPTS]: Students in an Ohio State University psychology class are being taught that atheists have higher IQs than Christians, according to a college watchdog organization.

Campus Reform notes that a question from a recent online psychology quiz from the university implied that religious beliefs were directly related to IQ levels.

"Theo has an IQ of 100 and Aine has an IQ of 125," the quiz stated. "Which of the following statements would you expect to be true?"

Students were then asked to select an answer from the following four options:

Aine is an atheist, while Theo is a Christian.

Aine earns less money than Theo.

Theo is more liberal than Aine.

Theo is an atheist, while Aine is a Christian.

According to the school, the correct answer is option #1.

The quiz question was purportedly part of an online homework set for Ohio State's Psychology 1100 course. Psychology 1100...is a general education requirement, which means many students from a variety of disciplines take the class each year.

The anonymous student who first told *Campus Reform* about the quiz said that the question was unsurprising, considering the anti-Christian bias prevalent in many public universities.

"I understand that colleges have a liberal spin on things so it didn't surprise me to see the question, which is a sad thing," the student said. "But how can you really measure which religion has a higher IQ?"

"Colleges will tolerate pretty much any religion other than Christianity," he added. "If colleges really want to give everyone a fair shot, they should stay away from making comments about any religion."

T. A.'s Speaking Schedule

Oct 17-18	Discern for Life Conference Niles, MI (near S. Bend, IN) (903) 567-6423 www.discernment-ministries.org
Nov 7-9	Berean Assembly Spring Hill, FL (352) 597-3640
Nov 14	Living Word Church Miami, FL (305) 461-9929
Dec 14	Calvary Chapel Cypress Cypress, CA (714) 236-1288

STS 24/7 Broadcast Schedule

Oct 3	Dave James, pt 2 The Shemitah
Oct 10, 17,	Paul Wilkinson
24, 31	Christian Palestinianism

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

Letters

Dear TBC,

I want to thank you very much for the book, A "Wonderful" Deception, you sent [earlier this year]. There is no way I could have done the research....Our prison has been flooded with *The Purpose Driven Life* books....One brother in our study group would share certain questions and thoughts that were kind of "out there." Our teacher gently rebuked him and told him to quit reading whatever it was he was reading and stick to the Word....I thank our Father for exposing...our enemy's wiles through Warren Smith's book.

I must confess, I admire how [you] zealously stick to the Word when answering questions. How I wish I could keep my cool when confronted in person about the Bible. Yeah, I tend to be emotional....Thank you for your time and consideration. Keep our study group and discipleship groups in prayer, as well as the rest of your brothers and sisters behind these walls. God bless you all at TBC. RG (TX, prisoner)

Dear TBC Staff,

We would just like to thank you for the live-streaming of the conference. It was a blessing for my husband and me to be able to listen online as we are in the state of New York. We learned a lot and so much important information was gleaned....Sometimes it can be hard to discern...it can all sound so good and right, but it is not. Again, thank you and God bless you all and the work you do, and all the speakers who were at the conference too. JS (NY)

Dear Friends,

I must mention to you that Tom McMahon has done another marvelous job with the [July] *TBC* feature article ["What Think Ye of Heaven?"], and he should know it—at least we should tell him. Today everything is coming apart except the Kingdom of God, and as he said, our mind should be thinking more on His promises "over there." It's our Blessed Hope! AG (email)

Dear Newsletter Staff,

I truly enjoy your monthly newsletters and am continuously strengthened in my faith and in the Word. Thank you! You printed an excerpt from C. H. Mackintosh, "Job and His Friends," in the August newsletter. It was incredibly biblically based and so very encouraging to my walk and desire to become more like the Bereans. I have since done some research on Mackintosh. as I had never been introduced to him. I so greatly admire, esteem, appreciate, and grow from these wonderful "Bereans" of the late 19th century and earlier. They seem to be so..."right on" in the Word....Many blessings to you as you continue your work to help us all become more like the Bereans. BK (email)

Tom,

Thanks to you and your staff for the excellent conference. We really appreciated the archives being available for us to watch as we had time. We wanted to attend but were unable....The information, teaching, and worship were a blessing to my wife and me. We praise God for your ministry and the excellent presenters we heard. E&LE (ID)

Greetings Mr. McMahon,

As you can see by the envelope, I'm incarcerated in Florida. I started receiving your newsletter about a year ago. I'm truly thankful for the information you provide. I've had to change some things about me and really question what I was being taught before I came to prison. I'm not looking for sympathy. I alone put myself in prison. I made a very stupid choice and got 20 years for it. I've got a very different view now....It's hard to unlearn 40 years of incorrect teaching, but, by the grace of God, I've found my way to proper Bible teaching....I would like to thank you kindly

for your time. Please pray for me while I'm here and for my family to receive strength through this difficult time for them. [They] live in [another state] so we do not see each other. I know that they are hurting due to my actions. AL (FL, prisoner)

Dear Mr McMahon,

I'm e-mailing to say how much I enjoyed your Bible Survival series. It is true that reading the Bible is a vital occupation. One of my biggest regrets in life is not spending enough time reading it. BH (England)

Dear TBC,

As I read ["Prophecy Run Amok," August 2014] I was reminded of all the excised Scripture in contemporary Christianity's preaching, teaching, and writing. As it relates to Christ's return and date setting, they completely ignore Matthew 24:36-42. It cannot be any plainer!

I also read the NewsWatch item about "Presbyterian Divestment." Evidently Romans chapter 11 does not exist in what's left of their Bible. Also "replacement theology" is the tool that Hitler used to unify Germany behind his anti-Semitic crusade as it was dominant in both the German Lutheran and Catholic churches. AB (WY)



Becoming "Rock" Solid

It's very obvious to those who know the Lord as well as to many who do not that the world is in turmoil and things are hardly getting more stable. Well, Jesus not only had the answer—He is the answer:

"Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great" (Luke 6:47-49).

To take the Word of God lightly or sparingly or rarely is a recipe for peril.

T. A. McMahon Executive Director 9

THE SHEMITAH

Adapted from chapter 14 of The Harbinger: Fact or Fiction by Dave James (see page 2 to order)

IN HIS BOOK, *The Harbinger*, Jonathan Cahn argues for a direct connection between what has happened in America since 9/11/2001 and what happened to ancient Israel based on what he believes is a template of God's judgment in Isaiah 9:10. In the chapter titled "The Shemitah," Cahn argues that he has discovered the mystery of the *Shemitah*, which he claims is now affecting the United States.

In the Law of Moses, God commanded Israel to observe the seventh day of the week as a day of rest, and they were also to observe a Sabbath year, called the *Shemitah*, as a *year* of rest. Every seventh year there was to be no planting, reaping, or any other work in the fields. In addition, all who owed money to creditors were to be "released" (the meaning of Shemitah) from their debts (Dt 15:1-2). In turn, God promised to provide enough in the sixth year to more than meet Israel's needs during the seventh year (Lv 25:20-21).

If Israel failed to keep His commandments, however, including the Sabbaths, the Lord warned: "I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste....Then the land shall rest and enjoy its Sabbaths...for the time it did not rest...when you dwelt in it" (Lv 26:33-35).

Centuries later, Israel experienced precisely this judgment because they had abandoned God's laws and turned to pagan gods. Because Judah had not observed the Shemitah for seventy cycles, God sent the nation into captivity for seventy years.

This imposed Shemitah judgment was very specific and involved *only the nation of Israel*. Since no Gentile nations were ever obligated to keep the Shemitah, there is no scriptural basis for suggesting that any other nation would ever experience an imposed Shemitah judgment. Yet, this is precisely what Jonathan Cahn suggests that America has experienced.

Cahn also wrongly implies that the Shemitah is essentially a universal *principle* that is somehow integrated into the order of the universe. Cahn makes the following assertion in his book:

[KAPLAN] "Seven years—the biblical period of time that concerns a nation's financial and economic realms." [This and all quotes are taken from: Jonathan Cahn, *The Harbinger* (Lake Mary, FL: Frontline, Charisma Media/Charisma House Book Group, 2011)]

Although Israel was on a seven-year economic cycle, no biblical passages support Cahn's idea that natural economic cycles of seven years exist for nations in general. Furthermore, financial experts have not identified any seven-year economic cycle.

Yet, Cahn further states:

[THE PROPHET] "The sign of the Shemitah, given to a nation that has driven God out of its life and replaced Him with idols and the pursuit of gain. The issue is the Shemitah as a sign of judgment, the sign that specifically touches a nation's financial and economic realms."

There is no scriptural basis for interpreting recent events as a sign that God is imposing a Shemitah judgment on the United States or the world. Even if America were in the very midst of God's judgment, there are no passages that connect any *signs* to a Shemitah-type judgment for any nation but Israel.

In ancient Israel, the Israelites were not to work the land at all, and wealthy lenders were required to forgive debts owed to them. Then, when Israel turned from God, He *imposed* the Shemitah on Israel by sending the nation into captivity, collapsing the entire economy. Everyone lost everything.

Cahn goes to great lengths in trying to show from the Bible and history that God has imposed a Shemitah upon America, and yet he fails because nothing has happened in America that even roughly parallels Israel's being forced to leave the land completely fallow.

Similarly, a study of the credit and debt situation reveals nothing indicating that America's economy is under judgment as Israel's was. Cahn tries to support his claims based on the failure of a few large financial institutions (Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Lehman Brothers, and AIG). However, even though these were significant factors in the economic crisis of 2008, this doesn't follow "the ancient pattern" when Israel was invaded and overrun by a foreign army with everything of value being destroyed or carried away.

In sharp contrast, what America suffered on 9/11 was relatively minor when compared to Israel's complete destruction. Even though the US and global economies went through a serious contraction and many people were hurt financially, it wasn't close to the scale of the devastation in ancient Israel.

Cahn himself notes that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were rescued by the Federal Financial Housing Authority, and although Lehman Brothers' bankruptcy did rattle the US and world markets, Cahn's analysis is filled with overstatements that don't reflect reality:

[THE PROPHET] "Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy—the largest bankruptcy in American history up to that date. It would be called the collapse heard around the world. The fall of Lehman Brothers would, in turn, trigger the collapse of Wall Street and the global financial implosion."

The fact is that Wall Street did not collapse, and the global economy did not implode. They were seriously damaged, but they simply did not collapse. And though the Lehman Brothers failure was staggering in terms of dollars, if their assets and debt are added together, the \$1.25 trillion represents only 0.6 percent of the world economy and is exceedingly insignificant when compared to what happened when God imposed a seventy-year Shemitah upon Israel.

Cahn continues to try to make his case by citing the September 29, 2008, stock market crash as the "greatest single-day stock market crash in Wall Street history." *Although it was the largest point drop*, it wasn't close to the biggest *percentage* drop, which is the only thing that matters. In ancient Israel, *everything* was wiped away, which is not what happened to America. And though the Dow Jones did drop 7 percent, Cahn fails to mention that this doesn't even rank in the top ten drops in terms of percentages.

The Dow did drop about 25 percent in the two weeks following the defeat of a bailout bill on September 29, but even this doesn't rank in the same league as the 1929 market collapse. At that time, not only did it fall 48 percent in just over two months, but by the end of the crash, stocks had lost 90 percent of their value. Even the Great Depression was not of the same relative magnitude as what ancient Israel experienced.

The overstatements continue:

[THE PROPHET] "The crashing of stock markets across the world meant that the funds invested had vanished and would not be paid back, at least not for the foreseeable future. Both credit and debt, trillions of dollars worth of credit and debt, had, in effect, been canceled. *'Every creditor who has made a loan to his neighbor will let it go, will cancel it'*... a Shemitah."

... [KAPLAN] "And when the stock market crashed in September 2008, how much was wiped away?"

[THE PROPHET] "All the gains of the past seven years, and then some."

How can Cahn maintain that all credit and debt from 2001 to 2008 had "in effect, been canceled?" Of course, there were losses, but nowhere close to all debt was wiped away. If all debt had been wiped away, those who found themselves in upside down mortgages could have kept their homes and owed nothing. Furthermore, although the biblical Shemitah involved the cancellation of all debt, Cahn has redefined it to include *the wiping out of savings and investments*.

Cahn then goes so far as to argue for a *global* imposed Shemitah:

[THE PROPHET] "... The global economic collapse was, itself, one colossal Shemitah made up of countless smaller ones."

But in fact the world's economy did not collapse.

Cahn goes on to point out that September 29, 2008 was also the 29th of Elul on the Hebrew calendar, the end of the year, according to Hebrew reckoning, when all debts among the Jewish people are to be forgiven according to the Shemitah laws. He further notes that seven years earlier on Elul 29 (September 17, 2001, on the Gregorian calendar) the largest stock market crash up to that time happened in the wake of 9/11.

[THE PROPHET] "Take note.... A seven-year period that begins with a stock market crash and ends with a second stock market crash...a seven-year period framed by the two greatest stock market crashes in Wall Street history..."

[KAPLAN] "A seven-year cycle beginning and concluding with two massive remissions of credit and debt...the Shemitah"

Admittedly the timing is interesting, but is it significant? Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac collapsed on September 7. Lehman Brothers' stock dropped 45 percent on September 9 and announced a \$4 billion dollar loss on September 10. And then on September 11, Lehman's stock "took a second precipitous plunge." But why is September 11 considered *the* significant date and not September 15, when Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy? Or why not September 9, when the drop started? Or why not September 7? Cahn's argument is arbitrary and seems to be "cherry-picking" evidence to strengthen his case while ignoring related evidence that does not support or undercuts his arguments.

The author cannot have it both ways by arguing for exact precision to the day but then arguing for "in-the-ballpark" dates to make a similar point, switching between the Hebrew and Gregorian calendars. Someone has well said, "If you torture statistics long enough, they will confess to anything."

Another feature of Cahn's argument is what he calls "a mystery of sevens," which also relies on numbers and statistics. Cahn cites three instances where "seven" appears in association with the Shemitah and thus "demonstrates divine intervention":

1. \$700 billion: The amount of Lehman Brothers' rejected government bailout request

2. 7%: The size of the stock market crash in 2008 on the day Congress voted down the bailout

3. 777: The size of that market crash in points

Of course, the number seven clearly has special significance throughout the Bible, but this is not the issue. The fact is that the above numbers come from a very large universe of statistics that includes many different numbers. Using this method, the author could have been trying to prove any number from zero through nine and found the evidence he was looking for. In trying to demonstrate the validity of the "mystery of sevens," Cahn appeals to what he says are very precise numbers. Therefore, if precision is claimed to prove God's involvement, the numbers actually do need to be precise. Anything less proves nothing more than an interesting coincidence.

The first issue is the supposed sign of the 777-point drop on September 29, 2008. Late that day, CNNMoney.com reported the drop as 778 points. This was because the actual figure was 777.68 points. If the Lord were trying to draw attention to what He was doing, causing the drop to be precisely 777.77 or 777.00 certainly would be no more difficult for Him than 777.68. But as it is, the actual figure is just another number. Furthermore, while the DOW is important, the NASDAQ and S&P 500 indices are also significant indicators, and they fell 9.1 percent and 8.8 percent respectively. Would it have also been a sign from God if the DOW had fallen 8 percent but the NASDAQ had fallen 7 percent?

And, in fact the drop was not exactly 7.0 percent. Rather, it was 6.98 percent. Though this may seem nit-picky, when the basis for one's arguments is precise numbers, they need to be precise. Would it also have been a sign if the numbers were 6.51 percent or 7.49 percent? How much could it be off and still be a sign? How difficult would it have been for God to cause a drop of exactly 7.0 percent? Or better still, 7.7 percent, or even 7.77 percent?

If someone claims to be able to discern what God has done based on precise numbers, then precision should be expected. Yet the degree of Cahn's "precision" is both arbitrary and inconsistent. The numbers are interesting—but not amazing and clearly not the sure signature of the hand of God. The historical evidence for a Shemitah judgment is just not there.

Although the above strongly mitigates against Cahn's theory that God has imposed a Shemitah on the United States, the theological problem of proposing that God is using the Shemitah as a *principle* for nations other than Israel is even greater. The Sabbath day and the Sabbath year, the Shemitah, were exclusively part of the Law of Moses. If God had any expectations with regard to the Sabbath day or a seven-year economic or agricultural cycle apart from the Law, there would be corresponding revelation. However, the Scriptures are silent on this, both before and after the Law, and they never involved any nation except Israel.

The New Testament never indicates any Sabbath-keeping at either the day or year level for believers after Christ's death on the cross, but the writer of Hebrews does give additional insight into the matter of the Sabbath for believers in Christ. In order to prepare ethnically Jewish Christians for the soon-coming destruction of the temple, in chapter 4, the author states that those who have believed the gospel have already entered into God's Sabbath rest by faith—which would include both the Sabbath day and the Sabbath year (Heb 4:1-3, 8-10). Therefore, *because Christ fulfilled the Law, God does not impose a Sabbath day or a Sabbath year* (the Shemitah) upon believers.

Nor does God any longer expect Jews or any nation to continue keeping the Sabbath day or Shemitah. Rather, His desire is that all would enter His Sabbath rest through faith in Christ. There is no biblical basis whatsoever for Cahn's theory concerning an imposed Shemitah. Quite the opposite is true—his theory runs counter to the Word of God and the gospel.

Jonathan Cahn's suggestion that America may be under an imposed Shemitah is antithetical to the biblical concept of the Sabbath laws given to Israel alone and the fulfillment of those laws for believers in Christ. This doesn't mean that God will not judge the nations, including America. This doesn't mean that His judgment is not already underway. It may very well be—and if so, it is well deserved. However, whatever the judgment is or will be, it is not an imposed Shemitah judgment connected with Isaiah 9:10.

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES BOOKS AND DVDS



Occult Invasion

Hunt—As this timely reprint of the best-selling 1998 first edition powerfully documents, today's popular obsession with spiritual revolution, "societal transformation," paranormal activity, and "supernatural" signs and wonders has not just magically appeared by chance. The world and the church are clearly being prepared for some great event—but what? when? why? and by whom? Today, children and adults alike are faced with an endless barrage of "supernatural" violence and sexualized content designed to assault the senses—not merely for

titilation, but for transformation of values, beliefs, and lifestyles. Dave Hunt documents and exposes this false dichotomy of "darkness" and "light" that is not only deceiving the world—but countless believers in the professing evangelical church. The Berean Call, 647 pp.

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material, including testimony of some who

have recognized the subtle slide toward

"falling away" and seek to return to their

first love. This convicting little volume

is not merely a lament of the Last Days

church, but is packed with practical advice

on "redeeming the time, for the days are

evil" (Eph 5:16). Evangelical Press, 236

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This Little Church Stayed Home

Gilley—Many churches, riding the faddish waves of our times, have gone "to market," but not all. Some churches are trying to "stay home," that is, remain

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tual vitality and interest in missions was waning. This contemporized version of *The State* of the Church gives a clarion call to all believers to full surrender and service to Christ our King. CLC Publications, 155 pp. Retail \$9.99 B43122 wt.6 Reg. \$9.50 SALE \$9.00

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perfectly acceptable. Nanci De Gerlais knows better. Raised on a Metis settlement with fifteen brothers and sisters, Nanci's childhood and young adult life were riddled with the terrors that arose from the fact that her father and grandfather were both practicing medicine men. Muddy Waters tells the story of Nanci's life as a Cree Native American woman who, after years of struggle, oppression, and spiritual darkness, found light and truth in the One who offered her freedom. But Muddy Waters is not just an autobiography. It delves deeply into the framework of Native Spirituality. Native American Christians are looking for a great spiritual awakening within the First Nation/Native American groups by incorporating Native Spirituality practices into their "Christian" gatherings. In the process, the true Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), is being pushed aside. Lighthouse Trails Publishing, 229 pp. Retail \$13.95

Muddy Waters

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Howse-Readers will discover how demonically inspired worldviews have been cleverly packaged and promoted in positive, masking terms to disguise a destructive spiritual agenda now unfolding across America and around the globe. Though more names could certainly be

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SET134

Religious Trojan Horse

Howse-In Religious Trojan Horse, Brannon Howse 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, Howse shows exactly who is to blame and how. Worldview Weekend, HB, 485 pp.

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For Many Shall Come in My Name

Yungen-Most people believe the New Age has been long gone from our society, and, if practiced at all now, it is only by unconventional "fringe" types. For Many Shall Come in My Name reveals that this is not the case. In fact, quite the opposite has occurred. The New Age movement (a term not normally used by its proponents) has

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Tozer-Whether you are thirsting for more of God or do not yet know of the "mighty longing after God" that so consumed

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NEW! BLOOD MOONS RISING



Blood Moons Rising: Bible Prophecy, Israel, and the Four Blood Moons

Hitchcock—Has the final countdown to the end days begun? Are the heavens telling us we are nearing the end? Some have claimed its significance. In 2014 and 2015, there will be a phenomenon in the skies of four blood moons falling during Jewish feasts. This has only happened three times in recorded history: 1493-94, 1949-50 and 1967-68. Each time these dates have had extraordinary significance for the Israelites. From the discovery of the New World to the creation of modern-day Israel, have these

years of the four blood moons truly been turning points in history? Bible prophecy describes the moon being darkened and turned to blood. What is the significance of these signs in the skies? Mark Hitchcock addresses the alarmist claims of some prophecy teachers as he guides you through the relevant Bible passages so you can understand the times in which you live. Tyndale House Publishers, 202 pp.

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NEW! THE FACTS ON HALLOWEEN

Is Halloween just fun and games?



The Facts on Halloween

Ankerberg/Weldon/Burroughs—"Trick or treat!" Every Halloween, kids set out to gather as many goodies as they possibly can, acting out practices they know little about. Is this fall custom truly innocent, or does Halloween have a darker side? Whether through trick-or-treating in the

neighborhood or dressing up in scary costumes for school, children learn about witches and ghosts, gruesome rituals, and the occult. This concise book will answer such questions as *When and where did Halloween originate?* • *Is Halloween different today than it was a generation or two ago?* • *What should Christians know if they choose to take part in this event?* This concise booklet will help you make an informed judgment about the history and impact of Halloween and guide you in deciding how to approach it. Harvest House Publishers, 89 pp. Retail \$5.99

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