

*For unto us a*

# *Child* IS BORN

unto us a son is given:

and the government shall be upon his shoulder:

and his name shall be called

*Wonderful,*  
COUNSELLOR,

*The mighty*

# GOD

The everlasting

*Father,*

THE PRINCE OF

*Peace*

—ISAIAH 9:6

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

DECEMBER 2009

THE CRADLE AND THE CROSS

by DAVE HUNT

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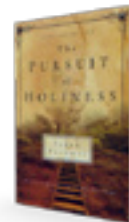
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“[The Bereans] . . . searched the scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things were so.”—Acts 17:11

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DECEMBER 2009

## **The Cradle and the Cross**

**Dave Hunt**

[ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN DECEMBER 1992]

Another Christmas season is here. Why December 25, since it's unlikely that Jesus was born at this time of year? The Roman Church simply took the Saturnalia, a licentious celebration of the winter solstice dedicated to Saturn, and Christianized it in order to convert pagan Rome. The actual effect was to paganize official Christianity. For example, statues of Isis and Horus were renamed Mary and Jesus so that pagans could continue their idolatry under Christian names. Pagan customs involving vestments, candles, incense, images and processions were incorporated into Church worship and continue today. No authentic history denies these facts.

Would the world, then, be better off without Christmas? Atheists think so and wish to remove all manger scenes and crosses from public places. Rather than joining the enemies of God in denouncing Christmas, however, might we not better cultivate the bits of truth that shine through the lamentable commercialization and paganism? This is a unique time of year for presenting the gospel to the world, so let us take advantage of the opportunity.

Christ's birth and the details of His life, death, and resurrection were foretold centuries before by the Hebrew prophets. No such prophecies preceded the births of Buddha, Confucius, Muhammad, et al. Biblical prophecy fulfilled is the most powerful persuader we have. Paul used it in converting the lost and turned the world of his day upside down. So should we.

In Romans 1:1-4 we see Paul's approach. He refers to “the gospel of God, (which he [God] had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures).” Christianity is not a first-century invention. It is, in fact, the fulfillment of that which, with one voice, the Hebrew prophets consistently foretold for centuries.

There are more than 300 Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. Why? So Israel could identify Him, when in the fullness of time God would send forth his Son (Gal 4:4). The third chapter in the Bible contains the first prophecy of the Messiah's coming, His virgin birth (“the seed of the woman”) and His destruction of Satan (Gn 3:15). The prophets declared that He must

be of the “lineage of David” (2 Sm 7:10-16; Ps 89:3-4; Jer 23:5) and rule upon David's throne. To prove that Jesus met this criteria, Matthew and Luke begin with the genealogy of Joseph and Mary.

Having rejected Jesus, the Jews still hope for their Messiah to come—but they hope in vain. Jesus Christ fulfilled Malachi 3:1 (“the Lord [Messiah], whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple”) when He cast out the money changers and merchants (Mk 11:15). The destruction of the temple 38 years later in A.D. 70 made it impossible during the last 1,923 years for any would-be Messiah to fulfill that scripture. Moreover, all genealogic records were lost in the destruction of the temple, so a future “Messiah” would not be able to prove the necessary descent from David.

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WE HAVE ALSO A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY; WHEREUNTO YE DO WELL THAT YE TAKE HEED, AS UNTO A LIGHT THAT SHINETH IN A DARK PLACE...

— 2 PETER 1:19

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Yes, the temple will soon be rebuilt. Instead of cleansing it, however, as Christ did, Antichrist will defile it with his image and force the world to worship him as God: “he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thes 2:4).

Jacob prophesied, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah...until Shiloh [Messiah] come...” (Gn 49:10). Shortly after the birth of Jesus, about A.D. 7, the sceptre departed when the Jews lost the right to enforce the death penalty. Thereafter, it was forever too late for Messiah to come. By God's grace, however, He had already come; and He will come *again* to rescue at Armageddon those who rejected Him the first time. They will know Him by the marks of Calvary (“they shall look upon me whom they have pierced”; Zec 12:10). The sceptre having departed from Judah, Christ, instead of being stoned by the Jews, was executed by the Romans, whose supreme penalty was crucifixion. Thus was fulfilled yet another prophecy: “...they pierced my hands and my feet” (Ps 22:16)!

But back to the cradle. Caesar Augustus had no inkling of the momentous effect of his decree “that all the world should [return to the city of one's birth to] be taxed” (Lk 2:1). That decree brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem in time for the birth of her “firstborn son” (so she had other children)

in fulfillment of Micah 5:2: “But thou, Bethlehem...out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel...”

What depth of meaning there is in the simple statement, “when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son” (Gal 4:4)! His birth had to occur before the sceptre departed from Judah; His death, after. His birthplace was determined by a Roman decree; His death and its method of execution, by the Roman occupation of Israel. He had to come before the temple was destroyed and with it the genealogic records.

The “fulness of time” has passed. No one else can meet the Messianic criteria laid down by the Hebrew prophets! That simple phrase, however, carries a much deeper meaning than we have seen above. If the timing of His birth causes us to marvel, the timing of Christ's death is even more precise and full of meaning. Daniel prophesied the very day of His death.

Through the writings of Jeremiah, Daniel learned that the Babylonian captivity would last 70 years (Dn 9:2). God had commanded that each seven years the Hebrew slaves should be set free, debtors forgiven and the land given a one-year sabbath of rest (Ex 21:2; Lv 25:2-4; Dt 15:1,2,12). For 490 years Israel had disobeyed this precept. As judgment, Jews became slaves of Babylon while their land rested the 70 years of sabbaths it had been denied.

While confessing this sin, pondering and praying, Daniel was given the revelation that another period of 490 years (70 weeks of years) lay ahead for his people and for Jerusalem (9:24). At the end of that time all of Israel's sins would be purged, all prophecy fulfilled and ended, and the Messiah would be reigning on David's throne in Jerusalem. These 70 weeks of years (490 years) were to be counted “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” (v 25). That crucial date is given to us in Scripture.

Nehemiah tells us that it was “in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king” (2:1) that he received the authorization to rebuild Jerusalem. When the day of the month was not given, the first day was intended. There were several Artaxerxes, but only one, Longimanus, who ruled more than 20 years—from 465-425 B.C. Thus we have the key date from which this incredible prophecy was to be calculated: Nisan 1, 445 B.C.

At the end of 69 of these “weeks” (7x69 = 483 years) “Messiah the Prince” would

be made known to Israel (Dn 9:25) and then “be cut off [slain], but not for himself” (v. 26). Counting 483 years of 360 days each (the Hebrew and Babylonian calendar), a total of 173,880 days from Nisan 1, 445 B.C., brings us to Sunday, April 6, A.D. 32. *On that very day*, now celebrated as Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey and was hailed as Messiah the Prince! (Zechariah 9:9 was fulfilled at the same time.)

There is, however, an even deeper meaning to the phrase, “In the fulness of time...” April 6, A.D. 32 was, on the Hebrew calendar, Nisan 10. On that day the passover lamb was taken from the flock and placed under observation for four days to make certain that it was “without blemish.” During the same four days, Christ, whom John the Baptist had hailed as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29), was likewise on display before Israel. On the fourteenth of Nisan, “the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it [the passover lamb] in the evening [between 3:00 and 6:00 P.M.]” (Ex 12:6). It was during that precise time period that Jesus died on the cross!

It is fascinating to see how God uses man’s decrees and even man’s connivings against Him to fulfill His Word. The rabbis had determined not to arrest Jesus during Passover, “lest there be an uproar of the people” (Mk 14:2). Yet that was when He had to die. Judas was not only Satan’s pawn, but God’s. Even the “thirty pieces of silver” he so shrewdly bargained for fulfilled prophecy (Zec 11:12-13). As Peter would declare in his Pentecost sermon, “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23). Paul wrote, “Christ our passover [lamb] is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor 5:7).

The fourteenth of Nisan began, as Jewish days did, at sunset Wednesday evening. That night Jesus and His disciples had the “last supper” in the upper room where they were preparing to eat the passover the following night. At this meal “before the feast of the passover” (Jn 13:1), Jesus told His disciples, “One of you shall betray me” (Jn 13:21). Earlier He said, significantly, “I tell you before...that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he” (Jn 13:1). The word “he” is in italics and does not appear in the original. Jesus was declaring once again to His disciples that He was Yahweh, the I AM of Israel, who tells beforehand what will happen and makes certain that it comes to pass (Is 46:9-10).

Arrested by the Judas-led troop in the Garden later that night, Christ was taken secretly to the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest. A sham trial before the Sanhedrin,

with hastily called false witnesses, convened sometime after midnight, condemned Christ to death as dawn broke. Shortly thereafter, Pilate, the Roman governor, was notified of the emergency. Hurriedly taken down side streets, the prisoner was received into the citadel at “the third hour” (Mk 15:25), about 9:00 A.M., Nisan 14. All over Israel preparations were underway to kill the passover lamb, which was to be eaten that night.

Jerusalem was crowded and in a state of great excitement. Valuing public relations, Pilate consulted his ever-volatile citizens and let them decide the prisoner’s fate. Incited by the rabbis, the bloodthirsty rabble suddenly turned against the One who had miraculously healed and fed so many of them. “Crucify him, crucify him” (Lk 23:21). “His blood be on us, and on our children” (Mt 27:25). The horrible chant echoed down Jerusalem’s narrow streets.

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I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NONE LIKE ME,  
DECLARING THE END FROM THE BEGINNING,  
AND FROM ANCIENT TIMES THE THINGS THAT ARE NOT YET DONE...

— ISAIAH 46:9,10

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Shortly before noon, the soldiers had finished their vicious, depraved sport. Jesus, scourged almost into unconsciousness and beaten about the face until He was nearly unrecognizable, was led through the frenzied, screaming mob out of the city to “the place of the skull.” By high noon, the One whom Jerusalem, in fulfillment of prophecy, had the previous Sunday hailed as its long-awaited Messiah, was hanging naked, in shame and agony, on the center cross between two thieves. Man had crucified his Creator! Angels recoiled in horror and the sun hid its face.

The next three hours of that Thursday afternoon the earth was darkened mysteriously (Mt 27:45) as God “laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is 53:6). Thursday? Not “Good Friday”? Indeed not. Jesus himself had said, “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth [i.e., in that part of Hades known as ‘Abraham’s bosom’]” (Mt 12:40; Lk 16:22). The gospel includes the declaration that Christ “rose again the third day” (1 Cor 15:4).

Obviously, had Christ been crucified on Friday, He couldn’t possibly have spent three days and three nights in the grave by Sunday morning. We are distinctly told that the angel rolled away the stone “as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week” (Mt 28:1). The tomb was already empty at that point, so Christ must have risen from the dead sometime prior to dawn.

Yet the myth of a “Good Friday” crucifixion persists, with much ritual and dogma built upon that obvious mistake. In this fact alone we have sufficient evidence of Rome’s manufacture and endorsement of untruth to cast doubt upon everything else it affirms with equal dogmatism. And what can be said for the Protestants who, by the millions, so willingly go along with this error?

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday—does it really matter? Yes! The day of our Lord’s crucifixion is of the utmost importance. If Christ was not three days and three nights in the grave, then He lied. Moreover, His death, to fulfill prophecy, had to occur at the very time the passover lambs were being slain throughout Israel. It is an astronomical fact that Nisan 14, A.D. 32, fell on Thursday.

“And it was the preparation of the passover....The Jews therefore...that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day...besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away” (Jn 19:14,31). Wait! Not a bone of the passover lamb (Ex 12:46) or of the Messiah (Ps 34:20) could be broken. Not knowing why he did it, “one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side” (Jn 19:34), fulfilling yet another scripture: “they shall look upon me whom they have pierced” (Zec 12:10).

John explains that the “sabbath” which began at sunset the Thursday Christ was crucified “was an high day.” It was, in fact, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, of which the first and last days were special sabbaths during which no work was to be done. That “high” sabbath ended Friday at sunset and was immediately followed by the weekly sabbath, which ended at sunset on Saturday. Thus two sabbaths followed Christ’s death, preventing the women from coming to the grave until the third day, Sunday morning.

The rabbis thought that having Jesus crucified proved He was not the Messiah. In fact, it was one more proof that He was! In taking His clothes for a souvenir, in gambling for his robe and giving Him vinegar mixed with gall to drink, the soldiers unwittingly added to that proof the fulfillment of yet more prophecies (Ps 22:18; 69:21). The nails driven into His hands and feet by Roman soldiers and the spear that pierced His side drew forth the blood of our redemption—all in fulfillment of prophecy!

It is impossible to remain an honest skeptic after comparing what the prophets said with the historical record of Jesus Christ, from the cradle to the Cross. Proof of the Resurrection, which we must leave for another time, is even more powerful! We have solid reasons for our faith in Christ. Knowing the facts increases our joy and gives us courage to present the gospel with boldness and conviction. **TBC**

## Quotable .....

One great use that Christians should [make] of the scripture is to learn the language of prayer. O that Christians would learn how to pray for their brethren in tribulation; that they would censure less, and pray more. Instead of speaking of one another, speak more for one another. Show ourselves Christians indeed, not professors of the letter but of the spirit. We would gain our brethren instead of blasting them.

*Thomas Case, When Christians Suffer, pp.121-22*

## Q&A .....

**QUESTION: I came across a supposed contradiction that has stumped me. John 1 “seems” to say Jesus was baptized between verses 34 and 35. Verse 35 says “again the next day...” (day one). Verse 43: “the following day” (day two). Chapter 2, verse 1 says on “the third day...in Cana of Galilee....” So John seems to say that Jesus was in Cana three days after His baptism, even though John doesn’t mention His baptism. The other gospels seem to say that Jesus went to the wilderness for 40 days right after His baptism (Matthew 3:13-11). Mark 1:9 tells us that Jesus was baptized, while verse 12 says “immediately” the Spirit drove him into the wilderness; Luke seems to also say that Jesus went to the wilderness after he was baptized. The question is “Where was Jesus three days after His baptism?”**

**RESPONSE:** Paul admonishes in 2 Timothy 2:15, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” In view of this, what is the context of these verses and how might they rightly be divided?

We don’t believe this is a contradiction, particularly since John’s discourse regarding Christ (Jn 1:29-36) speaks of the baptism as past tense. After identifying Jesus as the lamb “which taketh away the sin of the world” (v. 29), John states “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him” (v. 32). He’s speaking of an event that has already occurred. Consequently, we see no contradiction in the other gospels that speak of the Lord’s temptation in the wilderness following shortly thereafter. John 1 is speaking of a separate event, and one that took place after those recorded in the other gospels.

**QUESTION: The Bible often speaks against following tradition more than the Word of God. The martyrdom, however, of almost all of the apostles is known to us because of tradition. My question is, why do we give this tradition more weight than other traditions?**

**RESPONSE:** You rightly point out that tradition can never be given the weight that Scripture has. Because of this, you wonder why “we” give the tradition concerning the martyrdom of the disciples more weight than other traditions.

We don’t. On the extremely few times we would reference the “traditions” concerning the death of the apostles, we should point out that they are just that, only traditions. Consequently, if we say “traditions,” our readers should recognize that this does not carry the weight of Scripture, and should be treated as such.

Further, the tradition regarding the martyrdom of the Apostles is used in clarifying history, not in formulating doctrines as the traditions of Catholicism are used. That’s a vast difference.

Moreover, in the Scriptures we are given glimpses of the martyrdom the Apostles would endure. Paul, from his prison cell in Rome wrote, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand” (2 Tm 4:6). Jesus told Peter, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he said to him, Follow me” (Jn 21:18-19). Where wouldn’t Peter previously go?

In John 13:36-38 we read, “Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.”

Peter wouldn’t go all the way to the cross. Tradition holds that Peter was crucified upside down on a cross. The words used in Scripture would seem to support this scenario, but one cannot be dogmatic about the tradition, although it may seem “plausible.”

**QUESTION: If believers are raptured, they will return to earth during the millennial**

**reign. Yet we know that children will be born and death exists during this period... how do we find agreement between the two? Wouldn’t it be impossible for believers who are transformed to live in a world where death exists—indeed death results from sin unless the notion is that the believers who reign, do so in a different bodily form?**

**RESPONSE:** In Revelation 20:6 we read, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

The Scriptures must always have precedence over speculation. In this passage of Scripture we are told very clearly that the resurrected saints will rule and reign with Christ during the thousand years of the millennium. In 1 Corinthians 15:52 we are given further information: “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

“We shall be changed...” What a blessed promise! You ask whether it would be impossible for believers “who are transformed to live in a world where death exists.” No, for “we shall be changed.” The transformation we shall undergo will also equip us to reign with Christ for a thousand years. If we know ourselves, we know the necessity of being completely changed in order to be worthy regents with Christ.

Although we are not given the details of our transformation, it must be far beyond our imagination in order to enable us to “bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor 15:49). May the Lord encourage us with His faithfulness.

**QUESTION: I recall instances when TBC has said that everyone, even Christians, will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Yet, Jesus, the Lord, the Living Word, in John 5:24 says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath [past tense] everlasting life, and shall not [future tense] come into condemnation [judgment]; but is [already] passed from death unto life.”**

It seems we are told by God that Christians will not come into any judgment whatsoever; they have already, in spirit, passed from death to life, as Jesus was judged as being fully guilty for all their sins. Yet, despite John 5:24 supporting that position, TBC insists upon the idea that everyone, even Christians will appear before the Judgment Seat of

### Christ to answer for their every word and deed in the flesh.

**RESPONSE:** The fact that all believers must stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ is something affirmed more than once in Scripture (Rom 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:10). The act of denying this certainty looks to be generated by the assumption that the "Judgment Seat of Christ" judgment is synonymous with the "condemnation" of John 5:24. It is a mistake to assume that every usage of "judgment" throughout Scripture is only speaking of the Judgment of unbelievers. Context is always critical in meaning. We need not follow the example of others such as Jehovah's Witnesses who insist that every usage of a word must therefore mean exactly the same thing regardless of context.

There is more than one type of "judgment" spoken of in Scripture and we are to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tm 2:15). What is in view in John 5 is "everlasting life" (John 5:24a, the eternal bliss of the believer), and "condemnation" (John 5:24b, the eternal punishment of the lost). The "condemnation" of John 5:24 is a judgment the believer will never face. This is borne out by verses 27-29 in which the resurrected dead (both saved and lost) are either welcomed to the resurrection of eternal life or "condemned" into the "resurrection of damnation" (v. 29). Certainly this is a "judgment," but one far different than the judgment by the Lord Jesus concerning the believer.

The Lord repeatedly warns of the penalty faced by believers at the judgment seat of Christ. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor 3:13-15).

**QUESTION: In view of the finished work of Christ, is it possible that real animal sacrifices will be offered by the Jews in the Millennium? What possible need would there be for these sacrifices?**

**RESPONSE:** It is asked, "If all these things are merely meanings and symbols, why does the Lord then institute it at the end of time again?" Well, there are a number of things the Lord is reemphasizing. For example, there will be literal blood sacrifices performed by the Jews during the time of the Millennium (see Ezekiel 40-48). Please bear in mind that the Lord is faithful to fulfill

everything, and He overlooks nothing. There is a purpose in view here. We need to understand it, regardless of what it does to our preconceived ideas and theology.

Regarding the Millennial temple of the Jews, they will not be offering sacrifices for their sins; the sacrifices they offer will be a memorial for what the Lord has done. This will apparently be a requirement for the Jews alone. Just as the church has been given communion so that "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor 11:26), so the Jews will perform an ordinance that will continue to remind them of what Christ has done, but only during the Millennium.

While this act will not have the same significance for Gentile believers, consider how much meaning this will have to Jewish people, in view of their past failure to keep the law. Being consistent, do we then insist that these blood sacrifices continue without end, as the language in which they are couched parallels those verses speaking of the Sabbath in the Millennium? Certainly not!

As many have pointed out, the references to keeping the Sabbath in the New Testament are limited to Jewish observances. We pointed to the clear witness of Acts 20, which has consequently been attacked by those to whom its witness is not convenient.

## News Alert.....

**WorldNetDaily, October 29, 2009:** A resolution pending in the United Nations in one form or another since 1999 is being pushed again by the Islamic nations that originally proposed the plan they called "Defamation of Islam," which would ban criticism of the beliefs of Muhammad worldwide.

The proposal, sought by the 57 members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, now has been renamed "Defamation of Religions," but officials with Open Doors, an international Christian ministry operating in many of those Islamic states, is warning about its potential impact. [A] recent incarnation of the resolution sought to make the ban on criticism of Islam mandatory worldwide, even though support for the proposal at the time was plummeting.

Now, lobbying for the resolution has resumed among decision-makers at the U.N., according to Lindsay Vessey, the advocacy director for Open Doors who traveled this week to New York in opposition to the plan. If fully implemented, the resolution would ban "criticism" of religions worldwide. But Vessey told WND the real

agenda was revealed by the original title of the resolution, "Defamation of Islam," which would "criminalize people who criticize a religion."

U.N. human rights provisions always have focused on individuals, but the concept of protecting a religion would give authoritarian governments virtually unrestrained power to attack individuals whose message they don't like, she said. "It would legitimize national blasphemy laws in countries that are actually going to persecute religious minorities, such as Pakistan and Afghanistan," she told WND.

Open Doors President Carl Moeller recently published a commentary describing what could happen under the proposal. "The United Nations is once again on the verge of introducing a resolution that goes against everything the world body supposedly stands for. A successful resolution would actually undermine the religious liberty and personal safety of Christians and members of other faiths," he wrote.

In fact, he said the resolution would "silence words or actions that are deemed to be against a particular religion, and that religion is Islam. While the stated goal seems relatively innocuous—blocking defamation of people's deeply held religious beliefs—in practice the statement is used to silence those whose only crime is to believe in another faith, or no faith at all."

He said the [Organization of the Islamic Conference] is the driving force behind the plan and noted, "The OIC's goal is anything but peaceful." He cited a comment from Leonard Leo of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, who described the resolution as an attempt to create a "global blasphemy law." "From the right to worship freely to the ability to tell others about Jesus Christ, the Defamation of Religions Resolution (previously called the 'Defamation of Islam' resolution) threatens to justify local laws that already restrict the freedom of Christians [and other religious minorities]," Moeller said.

When such laws are adopted locally, he said, they are used to bring criminal charges against individuals for "defaming, denigrating, insulting, offending, disparaging and blaspheming Islam, often resulting in gross human rights violations."

In August, Muslim extremists rampaged for several days through the Christian community in Gojra, Pakistan, he said. Seven Christians were killed, 19 injured and more than 100 homes looted. The violence was sparked by "an unsubstantiated rumor of 'blasphemy.'" The U.N. resolution will make such cases more numerous and worse when they occur, he said.

## Speaking Schedule

<b>Jan 21-22</b> (Dave/TA)	<b>Calvary Chapel of the Finger Lakes</b> Farmington, NY (585) 398-3550
<b>Jan 31- Feb 5</b> (TA)	<b>Jonquiere Christian Assembly</b> Jonquiere, QC (418) 542-5075
<b>Jul 9-11</b>	<b>TBC Conference</b> Bend, OR (800) 937-6638
<b>Aug 28-31</b> (TA)	<b>Truth 4 Youth Teaching Conference</b> Devon, United Kingdom 44 1494764730

## Letters .....

### Dear Mr. McMahon and Mr. Hunt,

Thank you for your consistent truth from the Scriptures. I lead a Bible study group in the country of Panama. I wanted you both to know that we use your resources, mainly DVDs for our study materials. We are alert and awake watchmen on the wall in Panama, praying for the peace of Jerusalem. MK (Panama)

### Dear Mr. Hunt,

I just received (and read and re-read!) a copy of your book *A Woman Rides the Beast*. I have known for years the essence of your message, but I was/am most impressed with the detail and documentation you provide. Mind boggling! A true "magnum opus." DS (Canada)

### Dear Dave,

I can't begin to tell you how the words I read in your article today moved me. I was simply searching the web for a passage of scripture when I came upon your article, "Bless the Lord" (9/05). Praise God for your obedience to Him. YB (email)

### Dear Dave and Tom,

I am thankful that you both base your ministry on the "good way" of God's Word. I appreciate your identifications of false teachers and of why their messages are not in agreement [with] God's Word. We must not be surprised when God brings judgment on the USA when even the church follows the anti-God philosophy and theology developed by men. May you have "rest for your souls" as you stand for the truth. PL (WA)

### Dear Brother McMahon,

I felt that the article "Thus Saith the Lord" in the September issue of *TBC* was an excellent commentary on the Bobgans' latest book, *Person to Person Ministry*. I just wanted to mention two additional

things about the book. First it is perhaps the clearest, most concise, simplest and most accurate explanation of what is wrong with the whole psychology scene. Second, the last part of the book, written to teach us how to counsel others properly, may have an unintended and even larger application, namely, showing us how to deal with problems in our own lives. It is one of the best books that I have read, and your commentary on it was certainly one of the better articles that I have read. AB (WY)

### Hello,

I have read the book *The Shack*, and I really didn't focus on the way that God was portrayed. I focused more on Mack, and the things he was going through—his emotions about what he could have done differently to save his daughter, and also the things he was going through with his belief and faith in God. But after reading your newsletter (8/09), you have looked at this book from a different perspective, and I agree with you [on] how God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—was degraded, and how this book could be very dangerous for the babe in Christ and also for the seeker. Thank you. DP (prisoner, FL)

### TBC,

I am not trying to defend election as a doctrine, but I think the arguments are semantic usually. We are Christians, elect in Christ Jesus. Those who have not been born again, are not among the elect...yet. Paul himself talks about the elect and it means just this. Yes, "whosoever will..." but not "whosoever won't..." Christ died for the sins of the world...God is not willing that any should perish...but does this mean that none will perish since it is God's will that NONE perish? Therefore, I think we need to stop arguing semantics and do what you preach about, study the scriptures to see if it is so. GS (email)

### Dear Dave and Tom,

Thank you so much for the answer to the question regarding Christians being subjected to "outer darkness" in the Misslers' book [*Kingdom, Power, and Glory*]! I started reading it about a year ago and even though I didn't think they had it right, it has continued to cause me to fear. It has been a heavy burden because I knew that some of the things I've done in Christ's name I did in my strength. Thank you for explaining the correct application! SH (email)

### Dear Dave Hunt,

I just completed reading *What Love Is This?*, and I simply want to say THANK YOU for this very helpful book. I will be recommending it to many people. I believe

that it represents Biblical soteriology very well (in contrast to both Calvin and modern Calvinism)...I want to especially thank you for making the major point that Calvinism misrepresents God and His love for all mankind. It shows the danger of imposing one's philosophy on the Bible. I am very encouraged to find a number of scholars speaking out about Calvinism. God bless you and your ministry. RL (email)

## TBC Notes

### Prayers Greatly Appreciated

As many of you know, Dave Hunt and I have had our bouts with physical ailments for about a year or so. I'm thankful that I am almost fully recovered from a number of surgeries. Dave, however, continues to battle the consequences of his previous surgeries and resulting physical instability. His last two falls (one just a month ago) resulted in spine damage, for which he recently underwent surgery. The operation was successful, and our hope and prayer is that the outcome will be that Dave's stability will be restored to the degree that he can graduate from a walker to a cane. That would be a wonderful blessing for him.

The two of us are not the only members of the TBC family dealing with serious physical issues as we fight the good fight of faith. We covet your prayers for Barbara Romine, our managing editor and Dave's helper extraordinaire on his soon-to-be-released *Cosmos, Creator, and Human Destiny*. She has recently been diagnosed with breast cancer and will be recovering from surgery by the time you read this. Please pray that she and Dave will experience the sublime encouragement of which Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:16-17: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

T. A. MCMAHON  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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## WILD AT HEART, OR TAKEN CAPTIVE BY THE ENEMY?

—Edwin Newby and Barbara Romine

There is an old saying that it is better to quit while you're ahead. In his book *Wild at Heart* (Thomas Nelson, pub.), author John Eldredge would have profited greatly from heeding this advice. He very rightly points out that men are ceasing to be men because of the influence of society, changing social mores, and feminism. According to Eldredge, men need to be "men."

He should have quit at this point. Instead of going to Scripture, he uses Hollywood productions, which apparently appeal more to Christian men than Bible studies do: "Compare your experience watching the latest *James Bond* or *Indiana Jones* thriller with, say, going to Bible study" (*Wild at Heart*, p. 13). Regardless of how much our flesh may be inspired by movie heroes, in Scripture we have the historical accounts of very real men (and women), and we know that "these things happened unto them for examples: and...are written for our admonition" (1 Cor 10:11). How can *James Bond's* blatantly immoral lifestyle possibly encourage and inspire men to be real men as the Bible defines? *Bond's* "heroics" may excite our emotions, but he remains a morally flawed figure of fiction.

*Wild at Heart* has been out for a while, but ask almost any Christian guy and you'll likely find that he was offered this book at a men's Bible study, retreat, etc., as a help to "recovering [his] masculine heart." Eldredge even invites women to "discover the secret of a man's soul and to delight in the strength and wildness men were created to offer." But what does this mean? Many men enjoy hunting, fishing, and outdoor life, but not all do. That doesn't make them lesser men. Courage and adventure are not limited to tackling the wilderness or scaling castle walls. Let's talk about the courage it takes to talk to your neighbor, your family, or strangers about the gospel!

Eldredge postulates three supposed principles regarding men: "a battle to fight, an adventure to live, and a beauty to rescue" (p. 9). One cannot find these "principles" laid out in Scripture, so Eldredge must improvise, wresting Scripture to support an unbiblical premise.

He implies that only in the "wild places" do real men encounter God. He speaks of Jacob, Moses, and Elijah. "Moses does not encounter the living God at the mall. He finds him (or is found by him)...out in the deserts of Sinai, a long way from the comforts of Egypt" (p. 5). Eldredge asks, "Where did Elijah go to recover his strength? To the wild?" (p. 5). In all three cases, these men were found of (or found) God after facing challenges from which they ran! Moses wasn't away from the comforts of Egypt because he preferred the wilderness. He fled to Midian because his human-devised plan to free Israel failed and Pharaoh tried to execute him (Ex 2:11-15)! Jacob was alone in the wilderness because he feared the retribution of Esau his brother (Gn 32:6-24). Elijah didn't "go to recover his strength" in the wilderness. He ran there for his life to preserve himself from Jezebel (1 Ki 19:3). God met Elijah in the wilderness, ministered to him, and gave him assignments that took him *away from* the wild (1 Ki 19:15-19).

Though denying "Open Theism," Eldredge portrays God as "a person who takes immense risks" (p. 30) for "it's not the nature of God to limit His risks and cover His bases" (p. 31). He also writes, "As with every relationship, there's a certain amount of unpredictability.... God's willingness to risk is just astounding..." (p. 32). This is certainly not scriptural. Yes, the Lord gave man the ability to choose, but His plan for their redemption was in place before the creation. The Lord Jesus is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rv 13:8). Psalm 90:2 tells us, "Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

Repeatedly, Eldredge points back to an unbiblical example without seeming to have thought through his remarks. He relates how "after I saw *Gladiator*, I so longed to be a man like Maximus" (p. 134). Really? What do we know about Maximus? He was a polytheist who sought bloody vengeance through violence and obtained it in his dying moments. Is this the example Christ left for men of God to follow? "For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pt 2:21-23). But Eldredge goes so far as to declare that God said to him, "You are Henry V after Agincourt...the man in the arena, whose face is covered with blood and sweat and dust, who strove valiantly...a great warrior...yes, even Maximus" [author's ellipses].

We also believe that his "take" on Adam and Eve is unbiblical (i.e., that Adam was with Eve during the temptation). The scriptural account (Gn 3:1) begins with the Serpent talking with *Eve*. The verse cited (Gn 3:6) doesn't say that Adam was with Eve, and to conclude otherwise seems to

require reading something into the narrative. Eve "took of the fruit," which, according to the literal rendering of the Hebrew means "took away, carried away, or removed." The strong implication is that she carried the fruit to Adam before giving it to him. That doesn't provide an excuse for Adam's behavior. Eve was deceived and sinned, but Adam was not deceived, Paul tells us (1 Tm 2:14). In fact, Adam sinned with his eyes wide open.

Eldredge has also collaborated with his wife, Stasi, on a book for women. At one time ranking number 14 on the *NYT* bestseller list in the category of "advice" (and still on the bestseller list in 2009), is the book *Captivating: Unveiling the Mystery of a Woman's Soul* by John and Stasi Eldredge. It appears that John by far overshadows Stasi in the writing of this book, often quoting entire passages from *Wild at Heart* (wait a minute—isn't *Captivating* directed at women?). Overall, the whole concept behind the book is rather frightening, from a biblical perspective. As in *Wild at Heart*, the reader is continually reminded of "the child within," with the dreams and hopes of childhood. Again, movies are brought into the mix as a way of defining what women (and men) really want in their lives, and this is likened to how Jesus used "stories" to reach people's hearts.

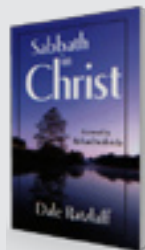
*Captivating* is dedicated to helping women discover their role regarding the man in their lives and seeing things through his eyes. One passage describes how a man can get hooked on pornography or adultery. No, it's not sin in his life, lust in his heart, or any of the things of which the Bible warns us. What he is seeking, according to the Eldredges, is really *validation*, ladies, and if your man isn't feeling validated by you (and, as a side note they add, "and if his relationship with the Lord doesn't give him this validation"), then with the first pretty face that comes along and offers something better, this guy is history. What does this teach women? Is this even true? The Bible tells us, "Husbands, love your wives....Wives, respect your husbands." It also says that to look at a woman with lust is to commit adultery with her. But here the onus is placed upon the wife to constantly try to live up to her (possibly sinful) husband's (potentially unrealistic) expectations, or else get ready to watch him walk out the door after the next short skirt that goes by. Is this how a husband loves his wife as Christ loved the church?

Another section deals with the book of Ruth in the Bible and how she "captured" a husband. This is the beautiful story of a woman's humble love for Naomi, a mother-in-law with nothing to offer her. We see Ruth's obedience to Naomi and God's subsequent blessing on her life, leading to the future birth of Jesus the Messiah. The Eldredges present this as an example of "how to catch a man." The story bears little resemblance to the Scriptures. According to the Eldredges, "Boaz is a good man....But Boaz is not giving Ruth what she really needs—a ring. So...Ruth...seduces him....The men have been working dawn til dusk...they've just finished and now it's party time....Ruth takes a bubble bath and puts on a knock-out dress; then she waits for the right moment...late in the evening after Boaz has had a little too much to drink: 'When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits...' (Ruth 3:7)." Eldredge comments, "'Good spirits' is in there for the conservative readers. The man is drunk, which is evident from what he does next: pass out: '...he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile' (3:7)...Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down." He continues: "There is no possible reading of this passage that is 'safe' or 'nice.' This is seduction, pure and simple—and God holds it up for all women to follow when He...gives Ruth her own book in the Bible [and] also names her in the genealogy. Yes, there are folks that'll try to tell you that it's perfectly common for a beautiful single woman 'in that culture' to approach a single man (who's had too much to drink) in the middle of the night with no one else around (the far side of the grain pile) and tuck herself under the covers. They're the same folks who'll tell you that the Song of Solomon is nothing more than a theological metaphor referring to Christ and his bride (Song 7:7-8)...I'm telling you that *I think the church has really crippled women when it tells them that their beauty is vain, and they are at their feminine best when they are serving others*" (pp. 156-57) [emphasis added].

It is a sad thing that this couple has managed to take texts from the Bible and pervert and twist them to suit their own idea of love, marriage, and presenting oneself as a living sacrifice to God. These books are still being offered to young (and not so young) men and women in churches, Bible studies, and recommended on Christian reading lists. We are in serious trouble when the Word of God is turned into a caricature and the men and women of God cast in a sleazy and less-than-honest light. May we be quick to discern when "Christian" writers try to portray Christian living in a manner contrary to the truth of Scripture.



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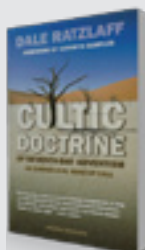
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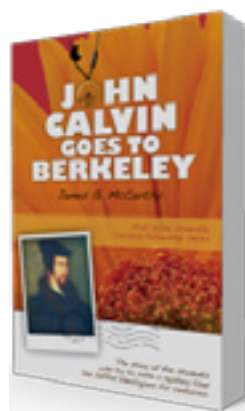
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**McCarthy**—Alex Kim has a secret, and he’s certain that if the students of University Christian Fellowship had known it, they never would have elected him president. His hope was that if he did a good job and God blessed their ministry on campus, no one would care. That was before John Calvin came to Berkeley. Now Rod Sutherland, UCF’s vice president, is on a crusade. He’s trying to convince the others that Calvin was right about predestination: God has already decided who goes to heaven and who goes to hell. An increasing number of students agree with Rod. Jamie Alfonso, the group’s treasurer, isn’t among them. “Anyone can accept Christ’s offer of salvation,” Jamie says. Angela León, a girl with a passion for truth, concurs. “God predestining babies to hell? I’m sorry; that can’t be right.” With UCF divided and ready to fold, Elliot, a doctoral student, proposes that they form a committee to solve the mystery of predestination once and for all. The others find that humorous, but after much discussion agree that Elliot is right. The only way to reunite the group and save UCF is for them to understand the true meaning of predestination. “If we figure it out,” Jamie says, “we could win the Nobel Prize for Theology.” If we don’t, Alex thinks to himself, UCF is finished and my year as president is going to end in disaster. City Christian Press, 304 pp.

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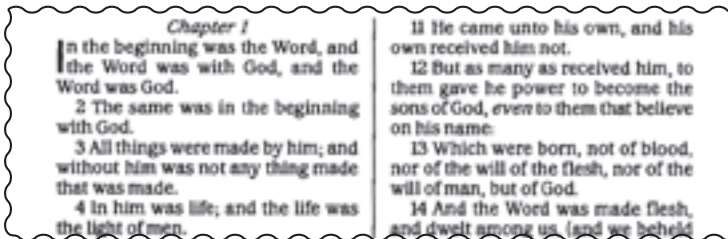
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## SHIPPING RATES & OPTIONS



**UNITED STATES** 

"Economy" shipping (Library Mail) is paid by TBC (no charge).  
 "Expedited" shipping will be sent either FedEx Ground or USPS (TBC's choice) for \$3. Overnight, 2-day, or 3-day is also available at your cost.

**CANADA / INTERNATIONAL\***

WEIGHT (UP TO)	GLOBAL PRIORITY/ GLOBAL EXPRESS
1	\$11.
2	\$16.
3	\$22.
4	\$27.
5	\$36.
6	\$40.
7	\$44.
8	\$49.
9	\$53.
10	\$57.
12	\$65.
14	\$74.
16	\$83.
18	\$91.
20	\$99.
add'l per pound	\$3.00

**6 TOTAL WEIGHT:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Canada / Int'l only—please round UP to nearest pound)

**7 TOTAL YOUR ORDER:**

Product/Resource Total \_\_\_\_\_  
 ← Shipping Fees \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gift to Ministry \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

IF MY FUNDS EXCEED PRODUCT AND SHIPPING COSTS, PLEASE KEEP BALANCE AS A GIFT

*Thank You!*

DECEMBER 2009

## 2010 CONFERENCE:

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED  
FREE ADMISSION!

TBC is very excited to invite our friends (old, new, and soon-to-be) to join us here in Bend, Oregon for a conference designed to help equip them to discern the times, to encourage them in their study of the Scriptures, and to exhort them to put to use what they have learned. We are thrilled about our lineup of speakers who will teach on a wide range of subjects, including creation versus evolution, prophecy fulfilled, evidence confirming Old Testament history, the new militant atheism, update on Israel today, the Emerging Church, counseling God's way, the necessity of diligent Bible study, God's marching orders for believers in the last days, and much more.

Bend is a spectacular recreation area for family vacations, and July is an ideal time to enjoy its opportunities for camping, hiking, fishing, biking, river rafting, kayaking, rock climbing, mountain climbing, backpacking, swimming, or simply viewing its magnificent mountain lakes and pristine river settings. All of these will simply be a bonus to the wonderful fellowship and teachings our conference will provide, by God's grace. Hotel space and campsites are at a premium this time of year, so be advised to make your reservations now for this summer (visit our website below for lodging options and details).

**JULY 9-11**  
**BEND, OREGON**



**DAVE HUNT**



**T.A. MCMAHON**



**KEN JOHNSON**



**CARL KERBY**



**AMIR TSARFATI**



**BIL GALLATIN**

*Pre-registration required • Make your reservations now*  
*• Rooms & campsites will sell out!*

**CALL NOW: 1-800-937-6638 • DETAILS AT: [www.thebereancall.org/conference](http://www.thebereancall.org/conference)**