



# The Watchmen

THE VOICE FROM THE WALL

## Inside:

- The Darkness of *Twilight*
- Gold: What's the Fuss?
- 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Saskatoon Bible Conference Details!

## Individual Highlights:

The Darkness of <i>Twilight</i>	1
Gold: What's the Fuss?	5
The Back Page	12

## The Darkness of Twilight

*We here at Berean Watchmen have been asked about this book and movie series that have taken our youth (especially young ladies) by storm. While researching the topic I came across a very good article on the issue, and rather than reiterate the same points, I offer this article as a re-posting. All rights and thanks go to Probe Ministries for this well written article on the issues at hand.*

*The biggest concern we have, and all parents should have is of course the impact this series appears to have over our youth – both Christian and otherwise.*

*"'Twilight' has targeted the collective soul of teenage America, and will surely have its way."- Wall Street Journal Online, Nov 21,2008*

### Demonic Origin of *Twilight*?

- by Sue Bohlin of Probe Ministries, reprinted with permission

The *Twilight* saga is a publishing and movie phenomenon that sweeps tween and teen girls (and a whole lot of other people) off their feet with an obsessive kind of following. Millions of Christian girls are huge fans of this series about love between a teenage girl and her vampire boyfriend-then-husband. But it's not just a love story made exciting by the danger of vampires' blood-lust. I believe the *Twilight* saga, all four books and their corresponding movies, is spiritually dangerous. I believe there is a demonic origin to the series, and the occult themes that permeate the books are a dangerous open door to Satan and his hordes of unholy angels.

I was stunned to learn about how the idea for *Twilight* came to the author, Stephenie Meyer. She tells this story:

*"I woke up . . . from a very vivid dream. In my dream, two people were having an intense conversation in a meadow in the woods. One of these people was just your average girl. The other person was fantastically beautiful, sparkly, and a vampire. They were discussing the difficulties inherent in the facts that A) they were falling in love with each other while B) the vampire was particularly attracted to the scent of her blood, and was having a difficult time restraining himself from killing her immediately."<sup>1</sup>*

"Fantastically beautiful, sparkly, and a vampire"? Consider what vampires are, in

the vampire genre that arose in the 1800s: demon-possessed, undead, former human beings who suck blood from their victims to sustain themselves. A vampire is evil. And the vampire who came to Stephenie Meyer in a dream is not only supernaturally beautiful and sparkly, but when she awoke she was deeply in love with this being who virtually moved into her head, creating conversations for months that she typed out until *Twilight* was written.

When I heard this part of the story, it gave me chills. Scripture tells us that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, which is a perfect description of the Edward Cullen character.

Then I learned that "Edward" came to Meyer in a second dream that frightened her. She said, *"I had this dream that Edward actually showed up and told me that I got it all wrong and like he exists and everything but he couldn't live off animals . . . and I kind of got the sense he was going to kill me. It was really terrifying and bizarrely different from every other time I've thought about his character."<sup>2</sup>*

I suggest that if the *Twilight* saga is demonic in origin, it is dangerous, to Christians and non-Christians alike.

### Vampires, Blood, and Salvation

I explained above how the *Twilight* saga was birthed in an unusually vivid dream that I believe was demonic in origin. So it's really no surprise that the books are permeated with the occult.



The *Twilight* vampires all have various kinds of powers that don't come from God. They are supernaturally fast, supernaturally strong, able to read others' minds and control others' feelings. Some can tell the future, others can see things at great distances. These aspects of the occult are an important part of what makes *Twilight* so successful.

In both the Old and New Testaments, God strongly warns us not to have anything to do with the occult, which is part of the "domain of darkness" (Col. 1:13) where demons reign. He calls occult practices "detestable," which tells us that He is passionate about protecting us. One of the reasons *Twilight* is so dangerous is that readers can long for these kinds of supernatural but ungodly powers; if not in real life, then in their imagination. And this is a doorway to the demonic, which is all about gaining power from a source other than God. *Twilight* glorifies the occult, the very thing God calls detestable (Deut. 18:9). This is reason enough for Christ-followers to stay away from it!

For a growing number of people, vampirism is not make-believe. In a special report on the Fox News Channel, Sean Hannity reported, "there's actually a vampire subculture that exists in the United States right now and spreads into almost every community in this country."<sup>3</sup> Joseph Laylock, the author of a book on modern vampires, explains that there are three general categories of people who "believe they have an 'energy deficit,' and need to feed on blood or energy to maintain their wellbeing."<sup>4</sup> Some drink real blood, others feed only on "energy" they draw from other humans, and "hybrids" who are a bit of both.<sup>5</sup>

My Probe colleague Todd Kappelman, a philosopher and literature critic, observed that Stephenie Meyer took unwarranted liberties with the genre. Vampires are evil, and you can't just turn them "good" by writing them that way.

You can't have vampires strolling around in the daytime. You can't make evil good and good evil, putting light for darkness and darkness for light (Is. 5:20). It's a law of physics: light always dispels the darkness. You can't have the bad guys win. There is no system in the world where evil is rewarded with "happily ever after"; it violates our sensibilities too much. Either the extremely ignorant or the extremely childish would fall for it. And apart from the moral aspect, it's doing

violence to the genre—like putting Darth Vader in a Jane Austen novel.<sup>6</sup>

Writer Michael O'Brien comments,

*In the Twilight series we have a cultural work that converts a traditional archetype of evil into a morally neutral one. Vampires are no longer the "undead," no longer possessed by demons. There are "good" vampires and "bad" vampires, and because the good vampire is incredibly handsome and possesses all the other qualities of an adolescent girl's idealized dreamboat, everything is forgivable.*<sup>7</sup>

Closely connected to the occult is drinking blood, which is a focus of the vampire literary genre; vampires feed on the blood of humans. In *Twilight*, we are supposed to embrace the "good" vampires who have learned to feed on the blood of animals, calling themselves vegetarians (which is an insult to all vegetarians!). Interestingly, in Lev. 19:26 God connected the occult with ingesting blood 3200 years before the vampire genre was invented.

God understands the importance of blood; in both the Old and New Testaments, He forbids eating or drinking it. Not only did this separate His followers from the surrounding pagan cultures, but it also separated out the importance of blood because it atones for sin. In the Old Testament, animals were sacrificed as a picture of how the spotless Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, would pour out His sacred blood to pay for our sins. God doesn't want people to focus on the wrong blood!<sup>8</sup>

*Twilight* is also spiritually dangerous in the way it presents salvation. When Daddy Vampire Carlisle turns Edward into a vampire, it is described as saving him.<sup>9</sup> He ended a 17-year-old boy's physical life and turned him into an undead, stone cold super-being, which Edward describes as a "new birth."<sup>10</sup> Vampire Alice describes the process as the venom spreading through the body, healing it, changing it, until the heart stops and the conversion is finished.<sup>11</sup> Poison heals, and changes, and converts to lifelessness? Healing poison? This is spiritually dangerous thinking. Isaiah warns us (5:20), "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"

This upside-down, inside-out way of thinking is rooted in Stephenie Meyer's

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***"there's actually a vampire subculture that exists in the United States right now and spreads into almost every community in this country."***

strong Mormon beliefs. *Twilight's* cover photo of a woman's hands offering an apple is an intentional reference to the way Mormonism reinvents the Genesis story of the Fall. LDS (Latter Day Saints) doctrine makes the Fall a necessary step, called a "fall up."<sup>12</sup> At the beginning of the book you will find, alone on a page, Genesis 2: 17—"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Stephenie Meyer explains:

*The apple on the cover of Twilight represents "forbidden fruit." I used the scripture from Genesis (located just after the table of contents) because I loved the phrase "the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil." Isn't this exactly what Bella ends up with? A working knowledge of what good is, and what evil is. . . . In the end, I love the beautiful simplicity of the picture. To me it says: choice.*<sup>13</sup>

Echoing Satan's deception of Eve with the temptation to become like God on her own terms, the heroine Bella eventually becomes a god-like vampire, glorying in her perfection, her beauty, her infallibility. She transcends her detested humanity and becomes a goddess. This is basic Mormon doctrine, not surprising since the author is a Mormon.<sup>14</sup>

One of the messages of *Twilight* is that there is a way to have immortal life, eternal life, apart from a relationship with God through Jesus Christ; that there is a way to live forever without dealing with the obstacle of our sin problem by confessing that we are sinners and we need the forgiveness and grace of a loving Savior.

This is a spiritually dangerous series.

### **A Love Story on Steroids: Emotional Dependency**

Why are girls of all ages, but especially tweens and teens, so passionately and obsessively in love with Edward, the vampire in *Twilight*?

Edward is very different from the vast majority of young men today. He is chivalrous, sensitive, self-sacrificing and honorable. He wants the best for Bella, his teenage girlfriend and eventual wife. He is able to keep his impulses in check, which is a good thing since he lusts after her scent and wants to kill her so he can drain her blood. No wonder girls and women declare they're in love with Edward Cullen!

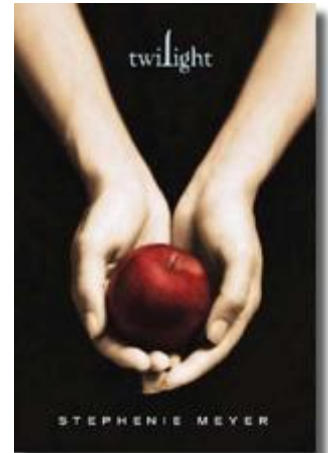
But one of the troubling aspects of the *Twilight* saga is Edward and Bella's unhealthy and dysfunctional relationship. Yet millions of female readers can't stop thinking about this "love story on steroids," which means it is shaping their hopes and expectations for their own relationships. That's scary.

The best way to describe their relationship is emotional dependency. This is when you have to have a constant connection to another person in order for you to be okay. Emotional dependency is characterized by a desperate neediness. You put all your relational eggs in one basket, engaging in an intense one-on-one relationship that renders other relationships unnecessary. In fact, there is often a resentment of not only the people that used to be your friends, but you resent anyone in the other person's world who could pull their attention and devotion away from you.

When things are going well, it's like emotional crack cocaine. The intensity is addictive and exhilarating. When things aren't going well, it's an absolute nightmare. Emotionally dependent relationships strap people into an emotional roller coaster full of drama, manipulation, and a constant need for reassurance from the other.

When Edward leaves Bella for a time, she becomes an emotional zombie. The book *New Moon* is full of descriptions of the pain of the hole in her chest because when he left, he took her heart with him. She had withdrawn from all her friends to make Edward into her whole world, so she had no support network in place when he left. All of her emotional eggs were in his basket. Many readers see this as highly romantic rather than breathtakingly dysfunctional.

One or both people are looking to another to meet their basic needs for love and security, instead of to God. So emotional dependency is a form of relational idolatry. People put their loved one or the relationship on a pedestal and worship them or it as a false god. When you look to another person to give you worth and make you feel loved and valued, they become inordinately essential. When we worship the creature rather than the Creator as in Romans 1, what results is a desperate neediness that puts us and keeps us at the mercy of the one we worship. They have a lot of power over us, which is one reason why God wants to



"The First of 4 vampire-based fantasy romance novels by author Stephenie Meyer"

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**"Many readers see this as highly romantic rather than breathtakingly dysfunctional."**





The Second book in the series

protect us from idolatry.

*Twilight* is like an emotional dependency how-to manual. At one point, Bella's mother tells her, "*The way you move—you orient yourself around him without even thinking about it. When he moves, even a little bit, you adjust your position at the same time—like magnets . . . or gravity. You're like a . . . satellite, or something.*"<sup>15</sup>

The power of story, especially this story, is that it can set up readers to mistake emotional dependency and relational idolatry for what a love story should look and feel like.

On the Credenda blog, Douglas Wilson makes a powerful case for *Twilight* also serving as a manual for how to become an abused girlfriend and then an abused wife. Edward's moods are mercurial and unpredictable, and Bella just goes along with it, making excuses and justifying his actions.<sup>16</sup>

*Twilight* is spiritually dangerous because of its demonic origin and its occult themes, both of which God commands us to stay away from. But it's emotionally dangerous too.

### Emotional Pornography

The *Twilight* series is touted as pro-abstinence and pro-chastity because the main characters don't "go all the way" before they get married. A lot of parents hear that and give a green light for their daughters to read the books and see the movies. But the *Twilight* books are a lust-filled series, so embedded with writing intended to arouse the emotions, that it is legitimately considered emotional pornography.

Marcia Montenegro writes,

*Much has been made of the alleged message of Twilight, that it is one of abstinence and shows control over desire. In truth, Edward is controlling himself because he does not want to kill Bella; her life is truly in danger from a ferocious vampire attack from the one who loves her. Aside from that, a vibrant sensuality of attraction lies just beneath the surface. A TIME reporter who interviewed Meyer wrote, "It's never quite clear whether Edward wants to sleep with Bella or rip her throat out or both, but he wants something, and he wants it bad, and you feel it all the more because he never gets it. That's the power of the Twilight books: they're squeaky, geeky clean on the surface,*

*but right below it, they are absolutely, deliciously filthy.*"<sup>17</sup>

The struggle with self-control is saturated with eroticism and lust. It's so sensual that teenage boys and young men will read it simply for that reason. The protest, "They don't have sex" is lame; the relationship is extremely sensual. One very insightful blogger writes,

*To claim that the Twilight saga is based on the virtue of chastity is like calling the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition pro-chastity because the girls are clothed.*

*Bella gives detailed first person accounts of her "make out" encounters with Edward—everything from trying to unbutton clothing, to how loud her breathing is and how this or that feels . . . these detailed first person descriptions are designed to arouse young girls—like a gateway drug to full blown romance novels or vampire lore. How can books in which the author has written detailed first person descriptions of actions leading to arousal help readers to be chaste? The words on the page defy chastity. Anyone who claims that the books promote chastity has to explain how a young girl can read detailed first-person descriptions of "making out" as a tool to preserving her innocence.*<sup>18</sup>

The sensuality of *Twilight* is not lost on even the youngest readers and movie-goers. Robert Pattinson, the actor who plays Edward Cullen in the *Twilight* movies, was asked in a *Rolling Stone* interview, "*Is it weird to have girls that are so young have this incredibly sexualized thing around you?*" He answered, "*It's weird that you get 8-year-old girls coming up to you saying, 'Can you just bite me? I want you to bite me.'* It is really strange how young the girls are, considering the book is based on the virtues of chastity, but I think it has the opposite effect on its readers though. [Laughs]"<sup>19</sup>

God's word says, "Flee youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22). Without a strong discernment filter in place, and without a strong determination to guard one's heart (Prov. 4:23), it will very hard to obey that protective command when reading the *Twilight* books or watching the movies.

Recently at a youth discipleship camp, I asked the young men how they felt about *Twilight*. They booed. Real men don't stand a chance to be enough compared to the too-good-to-be-true Edward Cullen. When girls use the emotional porn of

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romance novels or movies, they are setting up impossible expectations that have no hope of being fulfilled by limited, fallible, all-too-human beings. It's a cruel twist on the way men can sabotage their relationships with real women by their use of internet porn. Is there much of a difference between using sexual porn or emotional porn? In both cases, fantasy creates unrealistic expectations that reality cannot satisfy.

Apart from the problem of unrealistic expectations, it is unhealthy to make such an intense heart connection with a fictional character. Some people choose getting lost in reading and re-reading the books over having connections with real human beings in community. One lady told me that she called a friend about going out to a movie, but her friend begged off: "Oh, I'm going to stay in with Edward tonight." A nail technician had one 60-year-old client who confided, "Don't tell my husband, but I'm in love with Edward."

In the first *Twilight* book, Edward sweeps Bella off her feet with the intoxicating description of his intense desire for her and why she desires him: *"I'm the world's most dangerous predator. Everything about me invites you in. My voice, my face, even my smell. . . I'm designed to kill. . . I've wanted to kill you. I've never wanted a human's blood so much in my life. . . Your scent, it's like a drug to me. You're like my own personal brand of heroin."*<sup>20</sup>

I believe there is a spirit of seduction in the *Twilight* saga. Something supernatural draws millions of readers to fantasize about being desired, pursued and falling in love with a character that I believe has a deeply demonic component. It's dangerous on several levels.

### The (Rotten) Fruit of *Twilight*

*Twilight* is one of the most successful series ever published. Readers don't just read the books; many of them re-read them, multiple times. In order to be discerning, we need to examine the fruit of this series to see its effect on readers. I believe that there is a spiritual reality of evil behind *Twilight* that explains three kinds of fruit I see.

First is the fruit of obsession. Literally millions of fans can't stop thinking and talking about the books, the characters, the minutia of the *Twilight* world. There is

an addictive element of the series for many people. Addiction is bondage; why willingly submit yourself to bondage?

Some girls talk about their daily reading and study of "The Book," and they're talking about the whole saga—not the Bible.<sup>21</sup> With social networking and digital media, fans have access to an ever-growing community of other *Twilight*-obsessed people, which allows them to connect with their God-given desire to be part of something bigger than themselves. But the transcendence of connecting to the *Twilight* world is so much less than God intends for us to experience!

The second fruit is the spiritual warfare reported by Christians, especially those who disobeyed God's leading to get rid of the books—night sweats, hearing voices and other unusual noises, being gripped by a spirit of fear, loss of intimacy with God. Some thoughtful people have reported what one woman called "a stronghold I didn't want and couldn't seem to overcome. I became uncontrollably obsessed over this make-believe world. And fell into a pit of manic-depressive-suicidal state."<sup>22</sup>

One Christian teenager, clearly under conviction, wrote this comment on a blog:

*"As a 15-year-old, reading those books was a . . . strange experience for me.*

*I didn't think they were too bad or morally lacking until I heard my old high-school chaplain [a thirty-something woman, I think. Never dared to ask :-)] praise them. And then something inside me clicked, because it struck me as wrong that a Godly woman would find this series good...*

*Another problem with Twilight that I had is that it drives girls to think of love before they are emotionally and mentally ready for the idea. It pretty much skews their ideas of love up. I know it's done that to me. Because what this series has done is stick Edward Cullen in one category (i.e. "pure perfection") and "everyone else" lumped together in another as a portrayal of pure "ocker"ness. I am now not sure to what percentage \*gentlemanliness\* exists in a normal, TANNED boy. So it's not really fair to guys, or girls, because of skewed expectations. . . .*

*Otherwise, I enjoyed the Twilight series, but I don't feel that I should have, so I'm going to pray about that one"*<sup>23</sup>

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***"Don't tell my husband, but I'm in love with Edward."*** -

60 year old woman commenting on the lead vampire character in the book.

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***"I've wanted to kill you. I've never wanted a human's blood so much in my life. . . Your scent, it's like a drug to me."***

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***“Oh come on. It’s just a book. It’s just fiction.”***

The third fruit is a spirit of divisiveness. Some Christians are inordinately defensive about *Twilight*, choosing the books over relationships with other believers who take a negative view of the series. One Christian speaker who shared her deep concerns over *Twilight* at a church conference was verbally attacked at the break by supposedly mature women. Some of them still refuse to speak to her.

Of course, we hear the refrain, “Oh come on. It’s just a book. It’s just fiction.” But all forms of entertainment are a wrapper for values and a message, and we need to be aware of what it is. Remember, what we take into our imaginations is really like food for our souls. If something has poison in it, it shouldn’t be eaten. Saying “It’s just a book, who cares what it is as long as we’re reading,” is equivalent to saying, “If you can put it in your mouth and swallow it, it must be food.” What are you feeding your soul? Goodness or poison?

Readers resonate with the important themes of life and literature: romantic love, family love and loyalty, beauty, sacrifice, fear, danger, overcoming, conflict, resolution. But these themes are laced with spiritual deception: “You, too, can be like God.” You hear that *Twilight* is a love story on steroids, and people—especially young girls—are drawn to God’s design for a woman to be cherished, protected, and provided for. They are drawn to the way Bella responds to Edward with love, respect and submission, which is also God’s design. So it is especially devious that the elements that resonate with our God-given desires for love are poisoned as occult principles are interwoven with the story.<sup>24</sup>

One teenage girl made this comment on a blog: “I never thought of [the books] as arousing or erotic in any way. Like many other girls, I found myself falling for Edward as I delved into the story. Before I knew it, my heart was beating faster during the mushier scenes.” Like millions of others, she is unable to discern the line between emotional and sexual arousal. Swooning because you are in love with a fictional character, when you long for this character when you’re not reading the book, means you’ve been taken captive (Col. 2:8). And God does not want us in bondage to anything except Him!

*Twilight* is dangerous because it subtly stretches us into accommodating that which God calls sin. People don’t leap

from embracing good to embracing evil in one giant step; it’s a series of small, incremental allowances. Readers easily accept unthinkingly an unmarried couple spending every single night together when the Word says to avoid every form of evil and to flee temptation, not lie there cuddling with it! Readers are led to accept as heroes and friends vampires who murder human beings to drink their blood.

Commentator Michael O’Brien makes a stunning analysis of *Twilight*:

*In the Twilight series, vampirism is not identified as the root cause of all the carnage; instead the evil is attributed to the way a person lives out his vampirism. Though Bella is at first shocked by the truth about the family’s old ways (murder, dismemberment, sucking the blood from victims), she is nevertheless overwhelmed by her “feelings” for Edward, and her yearning to believe that he is truly capable of noble self-sacrifice. So much so that her natural feminine instinct for submission to the masculine suitor increases to the degree that she desires to offer her life to her conqueror. She trusts that he will not kill her; she wants him to drink her essence and infect her. This will give her a magnificent unending romance and an historical role in creating with her lover a new kind of human being. They will have superhuman powers. They will be moral vampires—and they will be immortal.*

*Here, then, is the embedded spiritual narrative (probably invisible to the author and her audience alike): You shall be as gods. You will overcome death on your own terms. You will be master over death. Good and evil are not necessarily what Western civilization has, until now, called good and evil. You will define the meaning of symbols and morals and human identity. And all of this is subsumed in the ultimate message: The image and likeness of God in you can be the image and likeness of a god whose characteristics are satanic, as long as you are a “basically good person.”*

*In this way, coasting on a tsunami of intoxicating visuals and emotions, the image of supernatural evil is transformed into an image of supernatural good.”<sup>25</sup>*

*Twilight* is not dangerous because people will literally want to become vampires.





*Twilight* is dangerous because, through the powerful medium of storytelling, dangerous ideas and messages go straight to the heart like a poisoned-tipped arrow, without being passed through a biblical filter. Beware the darkness of *Twilight*.

#### **Addendum: Should I Let My Children/Grandchildren/Students Read *Twilight*?**

I have read all four books in the *Twilight* series. I strongly recommend against reading these books.

But I also understand that it's a cultural phenomenon, and lots of people are going to read the books no matter what anyone says. So allow me to attempt to redeem the cultural pressure inherent in these books' popularity by suggesting how you can help the tender, untaught minds of your loved ones to think critically as they read.

If your teen or tween expresses a desire to read the books, give an explanation for why you think they shouldn't. ("Just say no" just doesn't work with most kids. They need to know why, and that's fair.) I would suggest something along the lines of, "I love you and I want what is best for you, and that means protecting you from dangers you are not aware of. This series is steeped in the occult and in demonic influence, both of which God strongly warns us against in His word. There is also a powerful emotional draw into unhealthy fantasy which could sabotage future relationships with real people. There are spiritual dangers and emotional dangers that I want to protect you from."

If you receive pushback, then you might respond by saying, "If you want to read the books, then I'll read them with you. We'll talk about them, a chapter or a scene at a time. The choice is yours." This gives your loved one the power of choice, but you remain involved in the process. What would be especially powerful for young girls is for Dad to read the books as well and talk to his daughter(s) about what's in them. Men would have a very different take on the emotional lust in these books, as well as a sensitivity to the unfair expectations of a lover that would be formed in their daughters' hearts. Girls need their father's input in this adolescent time of emotional and sexual confusion, and *Twilight* is almost guaranteed to add to the confusion.

Talk about the books' content frankly and

openly; if they are embarrassed for you to know what they are reading, their well-placed shame will make a powerful statement about the wisdom of reading this kind of book. Make sure they know that you are completely aware of what they are taking into their minds and spirits, just as you would want to know if they were taking drugs into their bodies. Reframe the book's content in terms of what the Bible says, and ask questions: Does this agree with the Bible's explanation of life and reality? Does this help you draw near to God, or does it make you want to avoid Him and His Word? How do the descriptions of Bella's, Edward's and Jacob's thoughts and feelings make you think about the people in your real life? Are you tempted to look down your nose at the "mere humans" you do life with?

Even though this work is fiction, it is still making statements about reality. What is it saying about life on earth? About God? About sin? About love? About the soul? About heaven and hell? About biblical truth?

How does the book compare to what the Bible says? For example, look together at the Ephesians 5 passage about marriage and why it is important. (Marriage is an earthbound illustration of the union of Christ and the church.) And what Jesus said about the nature of the marriage relationship in heaven in Matthew 22:30. (The marriage relationship is ended by death.) How does it compare with the ideas about marriage in *Twilight*? Look for the ways Bella relates to her father. Is it according to God's command to children to obey their parents (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20)? Does she get away with her deceptions and repeated acts of disobedience? (Yes.) Is this consistent with the Bible's teaching on the consequences of sin (Gal. 6:7)?

Talk about the gold standard for what God wants us to expose ourselves to: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Phil. 4:8). Look for what is true and not true, noble and not noble, right and not right, etc. The books are not without statements and ideas that are true, noble, and right; the problem is that they are mixed in with even more compelling ideas that are false, ignoble, wrong, impure, unlovely, and shameful.



*Tweens, Teens and their moms line up a week in advance for the movie New Moon which is based on the second novel in the series.*

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***"Look for the ways Bella relates to her father. Is it according to God's command to children to obey their parents?"***

**“How does my interest in this area compare with my time invested in my relationship with the Lord?”**

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 7:23). The things we think about by filling our minds and hearts will shape us. What are you filling your mind and heart with? Longing for the perfect lover that no human being can fulfill? Discontent with being human and wishing you could have supernatural powers? Will that serve you well?

Lia Carlile, a teacher at a Christian school in Washington State, offered these excellent critical thinking questions to help students think through *Twilight* or any other cultural phenomenon. Lia cites many Scriptures in her notes, which I highly recommend.<sup>26</sup>

### Question 1 – Me and God

- How is this thing building my relationship with the Lord?
- How does my interest in this area compare with my time invested in my relationship with the Lord?

### Question 2 – Me and the People Around Me

- Is this creating conflict in my family or with others?
- Does it offend other believers or is it confusing them in their faith? What am I saying to my non-Christian friends or what example am I setting for others?

### Question 3 – The Bible

- What does the Bible have to say about this? Who does it glorify—God or Satan? Jesus or the things of the World?

### Question 4 – Me and *Twilight* (or whatever applies)

- How is this affecting what I think

about; my attitude, heart, and mind?

- Does it help me to do what is right according to God? Or, does it promote things of the world?
- Does it distract me from the Lord and my relationships with others? Serving, praying, reading Bible, ministry, etc.
- Does it cause me to say, think, or do things that are contrary to Jesus and his life?

#### Footnotes:

1. [www.stepheniemeyer.com/twilight.html](http://www.stepheniemeyer.com/twilight.html)
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## Gold: What's all the Fuss? – Guest Commentary by Wilfred Hahn



In recent months, we have experienced a high level of inquiries about gold. The questions generally are all of the same nature ... basically, should we be buying gold at the present time? We assume here, of course, that Christians are pursuing such questions with a balanced attitude of stewardship. Nevertheless, it seems that some people are feeling anguished about the possibility that rising gold prices may be leaving them behind. Some claim that they are being urged to buy gold by

Christian radio show hosts, investment counsellors, friends ... and so on. The media is certainly hyping gold fever. "Dump the dollar! Buy gold," blazes a recent headline from Fortune Magazine.

As a rule, we don't make specific investment recommendations in *EVR* (*Eternal Value Review*). However, at times, balanced perspectives and cautions are direly needed (i.e. the housing bubble in "A Warning That Hits Home" in April of 2004.) The current gold price rally — rapidly becoming a



frenzy — certainly warrants some caution.

Should people put all their wealth into the golden metal such as some Christian investment counselors and also ministries are recommending? Of course not. That would not wise for several reasons, nor is this advice supported by sure future knowledge.

No doubt, from time to time, gold can be a rewarding investment. But by no means should people allow themselves to be deluded into thinking that gold is a sure-fire, all-encompassing solution to monetary security. Gold is not God's money. We must not forget that bullion is an earthly metal that attracts the machinations and lusts of mankind. In the end, its value is vulnerable to the manipulations and controls of government policies.

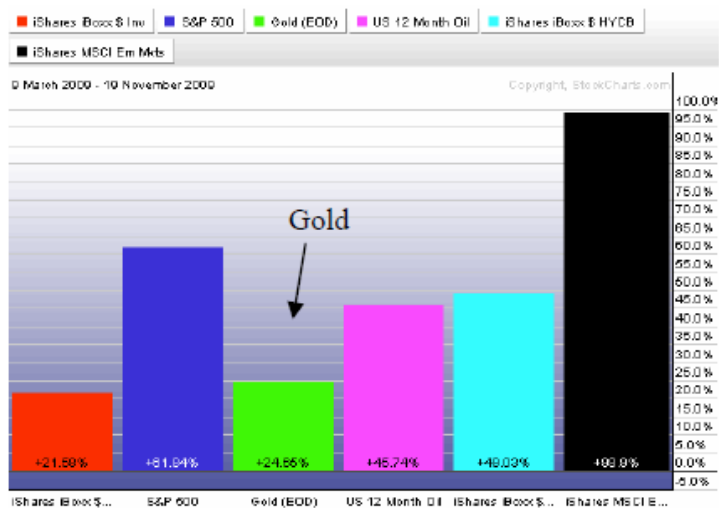
As such, we need to look at the facts and discover just why the price of gold has been rising, and whether or not it may continue to rise in the future. Here, as always in the world of money and commerce, real material facts are sometimes difficult to separate from the distortions of human affections and emotions. To this point, rising gold prices are at least partly explainable. There has been much negative press on the inflationary monetary actions of central banks around the world, particularly so the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank. Also, the gold price has been rising fastest in U.S. dollar terms because the U.S. currency has again entered a weakening phase against virtually every currency in the world in recent months (with the notable exception of the Chinese yuan).

That having been the case, many people are worried that the value of their money and savings, especially so in U.S. dollars, is being depreciated. Actually, all the world's major currencies have fallen in value relative to gold in recent times. All currencies of the world are fiat. They all have no fixed value.

Let's consider some countervailing facts that should serve to bring this "gold mania" into a more balanced perspective. In the first place, one should never place all of one's savings on one "horse" This is simply not wise, no matter how sure one's convictions.

Secondly, there are other assets that are just as attractive as gold, if not more so. There in fact have been other investments that have risen much more than gold since the stock market lows of early March this year (see the exhibit below).

### Gold Rising, But So Are Most Other Assets Gains since March 9, 2009, %



Source: [www.stockcharts.com](http://www.stockcharts.com)

But, aren't central banks creating a lot of money out of thin air these days? Yes, very definitely. But that is only part of the picture. Advisors that are recommending that you "jump into" gold, presume that world conditions today are similar to other periods of time when prices rose rapidly. Really?

For example, frequently cited is the previous "gold rush" that occurred between 1980 and 1982. The price of an ounce of gold then soared above \$800 from a level of less than \$100. I vividly remember the long line-ups of people jostling to buy gold wafers at that time. To the pained chagrin of many of those people, the price of gold eventually fell all the way back to \$254. Please view the gold price chart at the end of the article. You will note that following the emotional gold price spike upwards, in the 1980s, (a pattern evincing a similar frenzy as we are starting to again see today) prices fell markedly. Today, advisors reason that since governments now are pursuing similar inflationary policies as prior to that earlier time, that therefore the same outcome for gold can be expected. This is not necessarily a logical deduction. Why?

***"To the pained chagrin of many of those people, the price of gold eventually fell all the way back to \$254"***



For one, the world is today experiencing conditions that are remarkably different ... frankly, different from ever before. The times are unprecedented; the waters uncharted. Consider that the world, especially so in the advanced nations, are experiencing a retirement crisis; also an “income crisis.” Given “cupboard-bare” interest rate levels (virtually zero on most short-term deposits), pension funds today are starving for higher levels of income and so are most retirees. People today are more anxious about earning income that they were the last time gold soared in price.

Don't forget that gold bullion does not yield income (for the average investor, in any case). You can't live on income from gold. You must sell it to generate the cash to live on. Investments that yield high-income (i.e. interest or dividend payments) are likely to be just as eagerly sought during these threadbare times of income. In fact, to date in 2009, did you know that high-yield bonds have far outperformed gold? High-yield fixed-income investments year-to-date have fared much better. This fact alone should caution the rampant gold bulls. How is it that gold and bonds are rising at the same time? This is not normal. Actually, this pattern is more diagnostic of deflationary than inflationary pressures.

But aren't the U.S. and other parts of the world fated for a hyper-inflationary spiral? While central banks are indeed trying to re-inflate the world with their fiat money creation, this is not the sole determinant of an inflationary outcome. Other factors also play a role. For example, the capital destruction caused by an imploding debt situation can cause deflation no matter how much central banks may want to intervene with cheap money. This has indeed happened through the housing markets recently. Plunging collateral values have destroyed a lot of money as mortgages have been written off. There are other factors that are not well appreciated especially during times where private debt is contracting as is now the case.

Please be alerted that few economists really understand the workings of inflation. These can have varied and surprising effects. Inflation is a

chameleon of many colors. By its very nature it is deceitful and cunning.

For example, did you know that “falling prices” can today actually be caused by inflationary policies? That indeed has been the case for some time. It happens to be a strange side effect of a globalized, interconnected world of trade and money flows. How so?

Suffice it to provide a brief example. Consider that the inflationary policies of some countries actually have the consequence of overinvestment ... meaning here, the overbuilding of productive capacity in the form of factories and public infrastructure. Rather than giving rise to a condition of overconsumption (as tends to occur in North America) which may cause consumer prices to rise, in this case the opposite occurs. Huge credit-inflated, over-expansion in manufacturing capacity causes a surplus of export goods, which in turn causes downward pressures on consumers prices. Anyone benefiting from the yellow “happy face” proclaiming low prices at Wal-Mart stores will understand the impact of expanding Chinese production.

So we see that in the globalized world of today, the inflationary policies of one country can work through international channels to perversely cause falling goods prices in another by overstimulating productive capacity. That effect was evident in the case of Japan's “bubble” of the late 1980s. Now, it is happening on a grand scale through the hyper-expansions of the China-centric manufacturing hub.

Don't overlook the fact that China's boom of today is also, in part, the product of an unsustainable inflationary bubble. Its massive increases in industrial capacity are far out-running demand. Now that the American consumer is deleveraging and cutting back spending, China faces significant challenges in re-establishing its former pace of export growth. Consumer prices will therefore remain under pressure. Moreover, China will most certainly face its own crises in future years.

Another difference to realize (especially for those who are expecting another Weimar era of hyperinflation as



*A typical advertisement that you will see today promoting the buying of gold.*

occurred in 1920s Germany) is that today there exist well developed bond markets. This factor, along with an aging population in much of the western nations, suggests that bond markets will be highly vigilant against inflation. While it is true that bond markets are also prone to financial bubbles, over time they nonetheless are adverse to rising inflation. Interest rates tend to rise when threatened by rising consumer price inflation. Rising interest rates in turn act as a depressant on inflation ... a type of regulator.

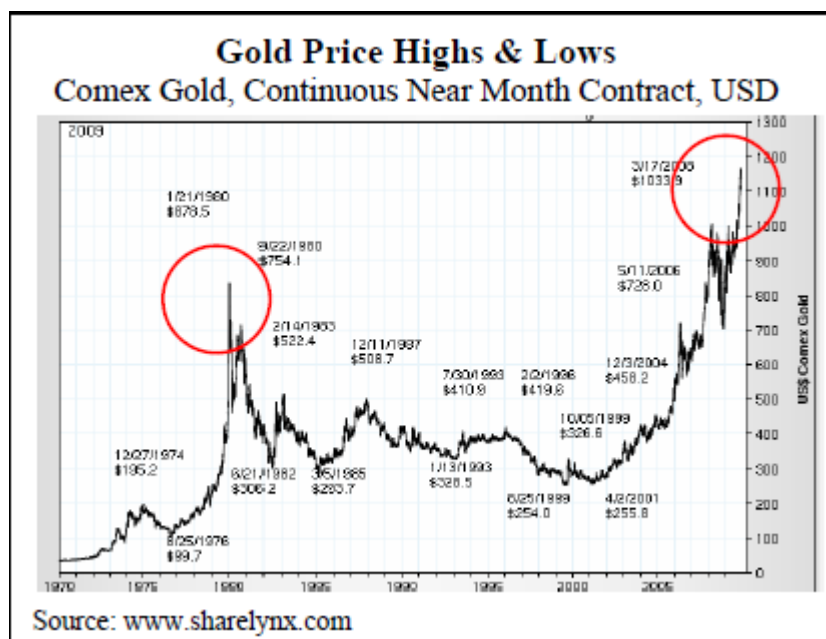
To sum up, just why should gold be such an attractive investment right now? Most people, of course, would answer this question quite simply: Because it is going up in price! Well, yes, that has been obviously the case looking in the rear view mirror. Gold may indeed get caught in a psychological updraft for no other reason than the hyped and emotional fears of the masses for a time. However, as we have pointed out, it is not a one-way bet as may be popularly presented. Even as gold prices have risen, the very seeds of its future collapse can already be discerned.

Financial trends are highly deceptive and rarely reward the frenzied masses. What to do? Firstly, stay rational. Being a wise steward means that one must strive to make reasonable, balanced decisions ... not emotional ones. No

matter how sure one might about any investment or endeavour, it makes sense to diversify one's investments. Why? Absolutely nothing in the world of money is certain.

Secondly, do not allow yourself to be swayed by the fact that the person from whom you are receiving advice is a Christian (or may claim to be one). That may seem a harsh warning. There indeed may be good reason to trust your advisor, yet, it remains a fact that Christians are no more accurate predicting future investment market trends than anyone else. In fact, it would not be surprising if they were worse. Why? Markets are amoral and treacherous. Why should Christians excel in such environments? Keep in mind that the sharpest brains in the investment world are frequently proven wrong. To wit, almost the entire economic and financial community didn't see the Global Financial Crisis coming. Why should the majority of them be right in their prognostications about gold in the future?

The bottom line? Don't get carried away by the pitchmen and cheerleaders for gold who want you to take out a mortgage on your house and to load up on gold-related investments. That is not prudent. Rest easy. Diversify your retirement portfolio, never bet, nor expose yourself to possible losses that you cannot comfortably sustain. Gold frenzy? In time, this too shall pass.



#### About the Author



Wilfred J. Hahn is a global strategist. A top-ranked global analyst and former chairman of Canada's largest international investment group, his writings focus on the end-time roles of money, economics and globalization. He has been quoted around the world and his writings reproduced in numerous other publications and languages. A founder of *The Mulberry Ministry* with his wife Joyce, they publish the newsletter, *Eternal Value Review*. His most recent book is *The Endtime Money Snare: How to live free*. For resources on "endtime economics" and to subscribe to the free newsletter, *Eternal Value Review*, visit Wilfred's website [www.eternalvalue.com](http://www.eternalvalue.com)

If you live in the Saskatchewan area, Wilfred will be speaking at the Christianity on Trial Conference in Regina, SK on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010.



## The Back Page

Berean Watchmen Ministries presents . . .



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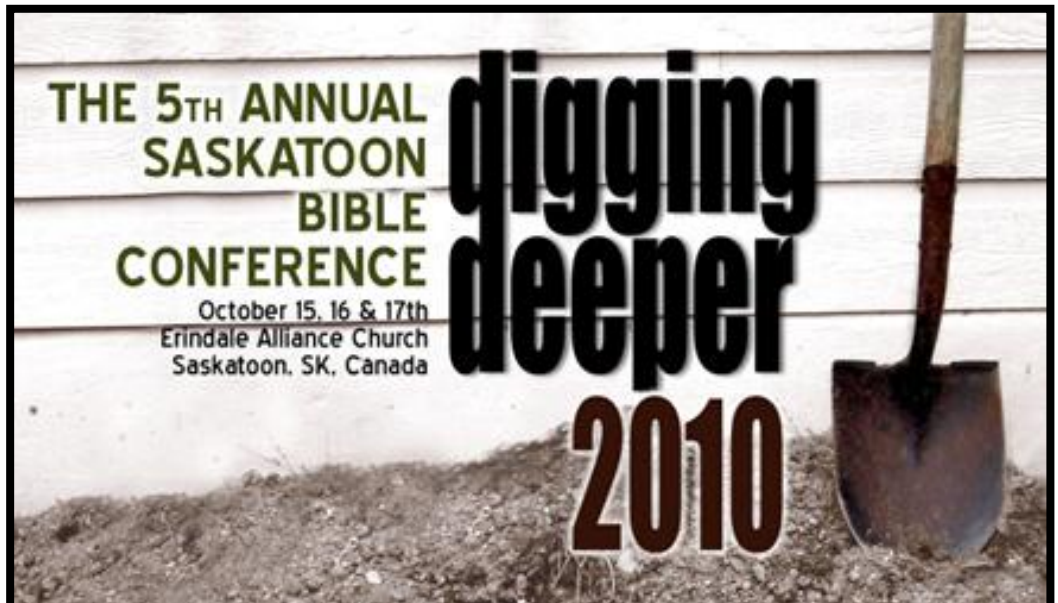
*"...Now these [Bereans] were more noble... in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."  
- Acts 17:10-11*

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**2010 Christianity on Trial Conference – Regina, SK**

J.R. Hall will be speaking at this annual event held in Regina, Saskatchewan on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010. Other speakers include, Wilfred Hahn, Terry James, Rob Gottselig and more.

### Overheard

*"The Devil is a better theologian that any of us and is a devil still."  
- A.W. Tozer*