

LAMPLIGHTER

"Prophecy is like a lamp shining in a dark place." - II Peter 1:19

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**The Jerusalem Temples
Where were they located?**



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Observations by the Editor

The Real Convergence

On page 17 of this issue there is an article of mine that is titled, "The Great Convergence Fizzle." It is about the failure of three sensational prophecies that were supposed to converge in September. They were prophecies of men and not of God. They were "prophecies" that cannot be found in the Bible.

Yet, many Bible prophecy students and teachers gave a lot of attention to these so-called prophecies — to the point that many people became almost hysterical in response to them. We were inundated with inquiries about them, and we tried to assure people that there was nothing to them.

I guess it is only human for people to focus on the sensational. But it is also tragic because it results in Bible prophecy being held in contempt by most people. The whole field of eschatology (the study of end times) tends to be a playground for fanatics.

I had a fellow call me one time and ask, "What is wrong with your ministry?" I asked him what he was talking about, and he replied, "You are always harping on the same thing — about the soon return of Jesus. When are you going to come up with something new?" By something "new" he meant something weird and sensational.

I make no apologies for focusing on the Lord's soon return. That is what God has called me to do. Furthermore, the promises of God's Word are so spectacular that I don't need to come up with sensational and imaginative things.

That's why the Apostle Paul wrote this fantastic statement: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Wow! That is a mouthful. I know some people who are suffering mightily, including my wife, and this verse says that no matter what they may suffer, it is nothing compared to the glorious promises of God that await them at death or at the Rapture.

Just think about those promises for a moment: the Rapture, glorified bodies, life eternal in a New Jerusalem on a New



Dr. David R. Reagan


Earth in the presence of God the Father and His Son. No more illness. No more pain. No more disappointments. No more weeping. No more death.


It is no wonder that the Apostle Paul made the following declaration in 1 Corinthians 2:9 —


No eye has seen,
No ear has heard,
Nor has the mind of Man conceived
What God has prepared
For those who love Him.


We need to focus on the specific prophecies and promises in God's Word and not the fanciful speculations of men. As I said before, Bible prophecy can be a playground for fanatics, but it can also be green pastures for disciples. That's because it builds faith and hope.

One final point. There really is a prophetic convergence going on in the world. This was one of the major points in my book about the signs of the times which I titled, *Living on Borrowed Time: The Imminent Return of Jesus*. I pointed out that the many signs the Bible tells us to look for that will signal the Lord's soon return are converging today as never before, clearly indicating that we are living in the season when Jesus will break from the heavens.

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The Jewish Temples:

Where were they located?

Dr. David R. Reagan

I have been receiving a lot of inquiries recently concerning a book written by Robert Cornuke that is simply titled, *Temple*.¹ The sub-title is, "Amazing New Discoveries That Change Everything About The Location Of Solomon's Temple," which reads like a Madison Avenue advertising slogan.

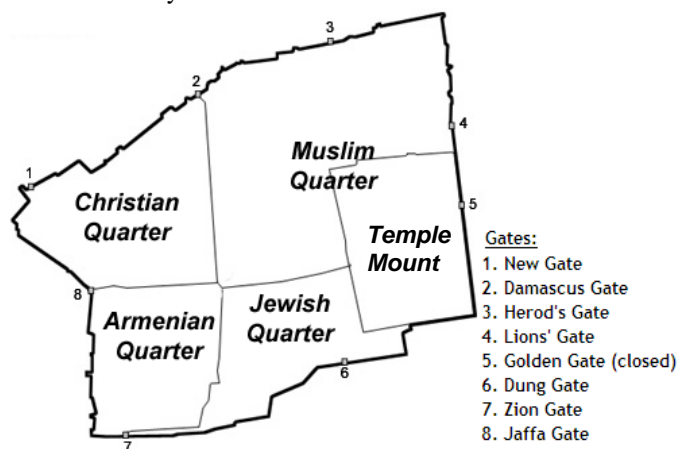
The thesis of this book is startling. It asserts that the Jewish Temples (Solomon's and Herod's) were located south of the Temple Mount in the ancient City of David and that the entire Temple Mount was the Antonia Fortress where Roman troops were garrisoned.

The author, Robert Cornuke, touts himself as a "former FBI-trained police investigator."²

Geographical Information

Before I take a look at his arguments in behalf of his radical thesis, let's take a look at the city of Jerusalem and its historical development.

This is what the Old City (the walled city) of Jerusalem looks like today:

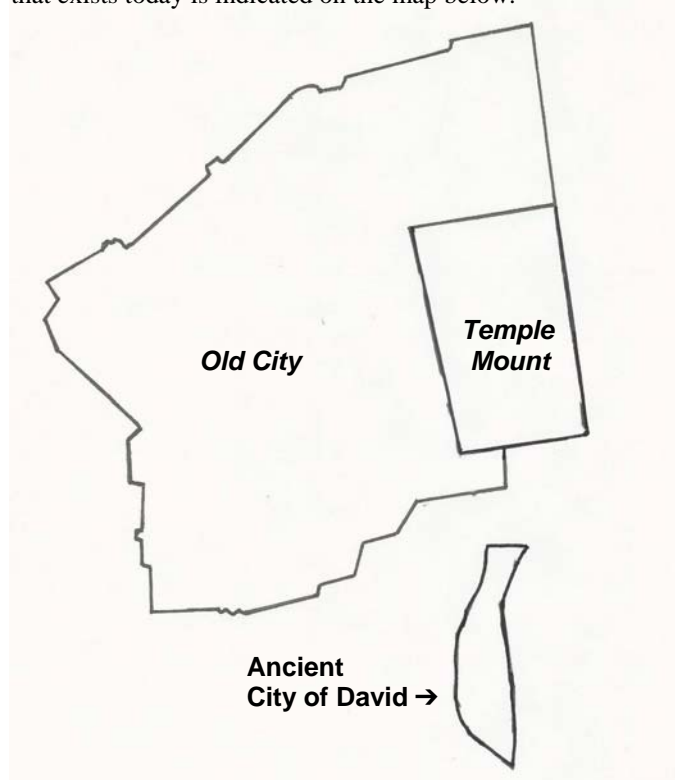


The walls you see on the diagram above were built by Suleiman the Magnificent between 1537 and 1541. The walls did not enclose Mount Zion which is located directly south of the Armenian Quarter, despite the fact that the Mount had always been included within the walls in previous years.

The story is the two architects of the walls cheated on the job and pocketed the money that should have been spent on the construction of the walls to encompass Mount Zion. They were executed for doing so, and their tomb can be seen today just inside the Jaffa Gate.³

What comes as a surprise to contemporary pilgrims is that none of the ancient City of David, the original Jerusalem, is enclosed within the walls as they exist today. That tiny Jebusite village that David conquered consisted of a little finger of elevated land of only 13 acres that was located directly south of

the Temple Mount. Its exact location in relation to the Old City that exists today is indicated on the map below.



Background Information

The Bible says that in anticipation of building a temple, King David bought a threshing floor to serve as its site (2 Samuel 24:24). The traditional, historical and archaeological views have been that the threshing floor was located immediately north of the City of David on a much higher elevation called Mount Moriah. It is the opinion of most biblical scholars that this area on top of Mount Moriah, called the Temple Mount, is where Solomon's Temple was built.

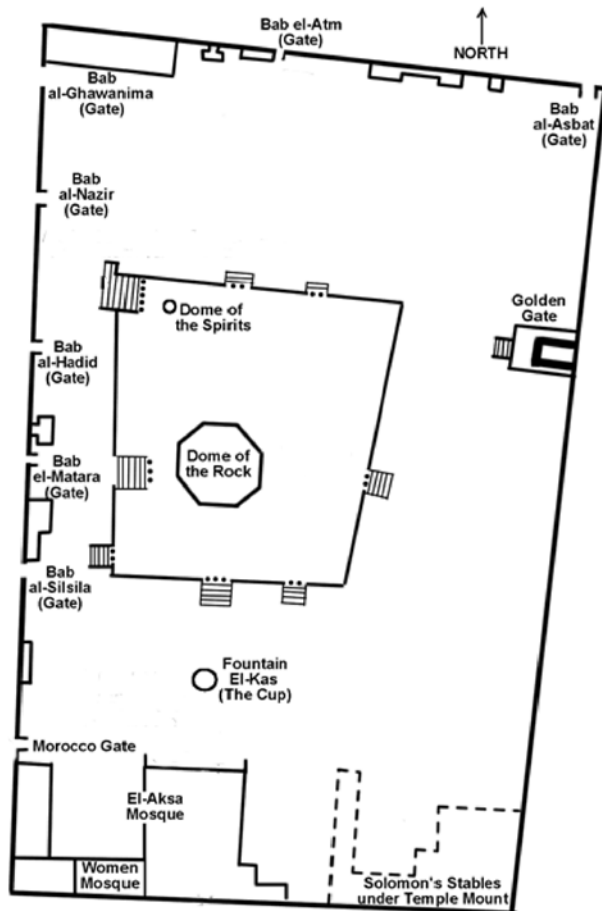
Solomon's Temple was destroyed in 587 BC by the Babylonians who took the surviving Jews into captivity. Seventy years later, the Jews returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt what is known as The Second Temple. According to Ezra 3:10-13 this was a much less elaborate temple than the one that Solomon had built, due to the poverty of the returning refugees.

Five hundred years later in about 20 BC, King Herod the Great decided to magnify the beauty of this temple. Part of his plan was to enlarge the Temple Mount platform. To do so, he built an incredible retaining wall all around the mount and filled it with dirt to produce a very large, level platform of 36 acres. The sacrifices continued in the Temple courtyard throughout this construction process, and therefore, Herod's Temple continued to be known as The Second Temple.

Herod's Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD,

and the Temple Mount stood vacant until the late 7th Century when a Muslim shrine, called the Dome of the Rock, was built by the Umayyad Caliph, Abd al-Malik. It was completed in 691 AD. It was supposedly built on the site of the Jewish Temple and was therefore considered to be a symbol of the triumph of Islam over Judaism. It was also considered to be a symbol of Islam's triumph over Christianity since it stood higher than the nearby Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

In the early 8th Century an Islamic house of worship was built at the southern end of the Temple Mount, called the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Today, the Temple Mount looks like the diagram below.



In 1967, at the end of the Six Day War, the Israelis conquered the Old City and gained sovereignty over the Temple Mount for the first time in almost 1,900 years. But in order to placate the Muslim masses, Moshe Dayan, the Israeli Defense Minister, immediately announced that the Muslims would be given administrative control over the Mount.

So, today, the Muslims control the Temple Mount although Israel retains sovereignty over it. Because of the Muslim control, no archaeological research is allowed. The Israelis have dug up the area to the south of the Temple Mount and have revealed the steps leading up to the entrance gates to the Mount that were used by the general public at the time of Christ. They have also uncovered huge mikvahs (baptismal pools) that were used for ceremonial cleansing before entering the Temple complex.

Because the Temple Mount is under Muslim control, and because the Muslims are intolerant of all other religions, there

are strict rules of conduct for those who are allowed on the Temple Mount. Men and women cannot hold hands. No Bible reading is allowed, and groups are not allowed to pray.

The Temple's Location

Over the years, and continuing until today, there has been a running debate among scholars as to where the Temple was located on the Temple Mount. The majority opinion among both archaeologists and Jewish experts is that the Temple was located where the Dome of the Rock stands.⁴

A few have postulated that the Temple was located at the south end of the Temple Mount near where the Al-Aqsa Mosque stands today.⁵

The strongest alternative is the one that was proposed in 1983 by an Israeli physicist, Dr. Asher Kaufman. He believes the Temple was located about 200 feet to the north of the Dome of the Rock, and he has presented some very solid arguments for his view.⁶

But the bottom line is that no one knows for certain where the Temple was located on the Temple Mount, and its exact location will not be determined until archaeologists are allowed to conduct explorations on top and under the Mount.

A Revisionist Proposal

In the year 2000, a man by the name of Dr. Ernest Martin made the startling proposal that the Temple was not located on the Temple Mount at all. In his book, *The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot*, he presented the theory that the Temple Mount was in fact the location of the Antonia Fortress where Roman troops were garrisoned, and that the Jewish temples were located to the south of the Temple Mount in the City of David.⁷

Robert Cornuke has simply popularized Martin's thesis, and he acknowledges this in the introduction of his book.⁸ Let's take a look at his arguments in behalf of his thesis.

The City of David is Zion

Cornuke's first argument, and his basic one, is that the Jewish Temples were located in Zion, and that Zion was a name for the City of David. As proof of this, he quotes 2 Samuel 5:7 which says, "... David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David."

It is true that at the time David conquered the Jebusite city of Jebus, the Jews who subsequently occupied the city changed its name and started referring to it as The City of David or Zion, and ultimately they gave it the name of Jerusalem. But the term, Zion, is not used in the Bible to refer exclusively to the original City of David. Over a period of time, it became an alternative name for the whole city of Jerusalem as it grew north to Mount Moriah (the Temple Mount) and then started spreading west across the Tyropoean Valley.

Evidence of this can be found in Isaiah 2:3 where it says, "And many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.' For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." The last phrase of this quotation is a classic example of Hebrew parallelism whereby the second part of the phrase says the same thing as the first part, but in

different words — equating Zion with Jerusalem. This sentence was written in the 8th Century BC, long after Jerusalem had grown beyond the original city of David.

Bringing the Ark Up to the Temple

Further biblical evidence that the Temple was located above the City of David on Mount Moriah can be found in 2 Chronicles 5:2 where it tells what Solomon did after he completed the building of the Temple:

“Then Solomon assembled to Jerusalem the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers’ households of the sons of Israel, to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion.”

This passage makes it clear that the Temple could not have been located in the City of David. In order for the Ark of the Covenant to be placed in the Holy of Holies, it had to be taken out of the City of David and brought **up** to the Temple. And what was the Ark doing in the City of David? It’s where David placed it in a tent when he brought it from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 16:1).

Study the diagram on the right. The City of David is the small finger of land at the bottom, from the dotted east-west line to the south. During Solomon’s reign, the city started growing north up the Ophel (the slanted rise from the City of David to the Temple Mount). Where the Temple is located on this diagram is Mount Moriah, which today is usually referred to as the Temple Mount. And, again, notice how small the area is. The Temple Mount is 400 yards wide, but when you go south, the walls taper down to a width of less than 200 yards.

Returning to Cornuke’s basic thesis that the Temples had to be located in the City of David because it is referred to as Zion, it is a thesis that cannot be sustained.

The Threshing Floor

Cornuke’s second main argument is that the threshing floor which David purchased for the location of the Temple was situated within the City of David (2 Samuel 24:18-25). This is also a bogus argument.

Again, Cornuke’s only basis for this assertion is that since the Temple was located in Zion, the threshing floor had to be in the City of David. But the Bible says otherwise in 2 Chronicles 3:1 —

Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

This verse makes it very clear that the threshing floor on which the Temple was built was located on Mount Moriah, and

not in the City of David. Furthermore, threshing floors in biblical times were never located inside cities. Instead, they were located on high places in agricultural areas where the wind could catch the chaff.⁹

Cornuke makes the bizarre claim that the threshing floor that David purchased was actually located over the Gihon Spring in the City of David. But as one of his critics has put it:¹⁰

The reason the Temple was not built on top of the Gihon Spring is the same reason people do not put a toilet in the middle of the kitchen table where food is eaten. The temple was built on a threshing floor. Threshing floors are dirty and were never built near springs. The particles would contaminate the water as the chaff from the wheat was blown away from the husk.

All these factors make it clear that a threshing floor inside the tiny City of David is just not a possibility.

The Water

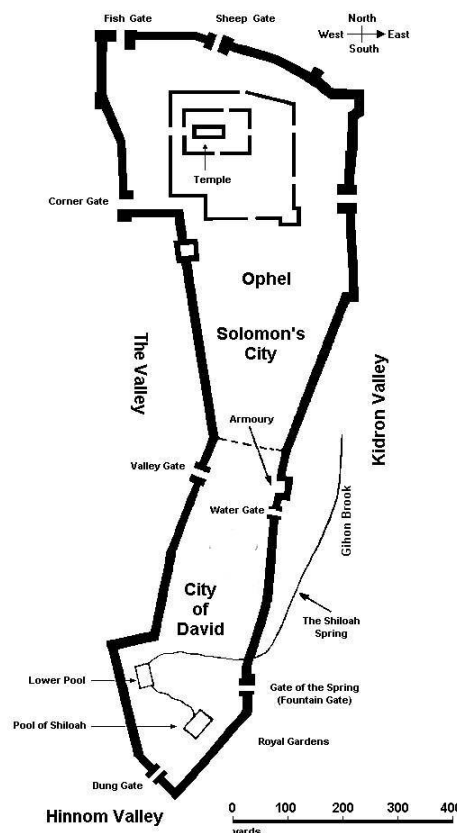
Cornuke’s third major argument relates to the Jewish Temple’s need for abundant water in order to wash away the blood of animal sacrifices. He asserts that because of this need, the Temple had to be situated in the City of David over the Gihon Spring. He cites two biblical passages — Joel 3:18 and Ezekiel 47:1-7 — to prove that the Gihon Spring was under the Temple.

The passage in Joel says, “. . . and in that day the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and the hills will flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; and a spring will go out from the house of the LORD to water the valley of Shittim.” Similarly, the passage in Ezekiel says that water will flow from under the threshold of the Temple. The water will form a river that will flow to the Dead Sea, and when it reaches that point, it will refresh the sea and bring it alive with “living creatures.”

The problem with these passages is that they are both presented in a Millennial context, and therefore they have nothing to do with the biblical temples. The verses are talking about the Millennial Temple which

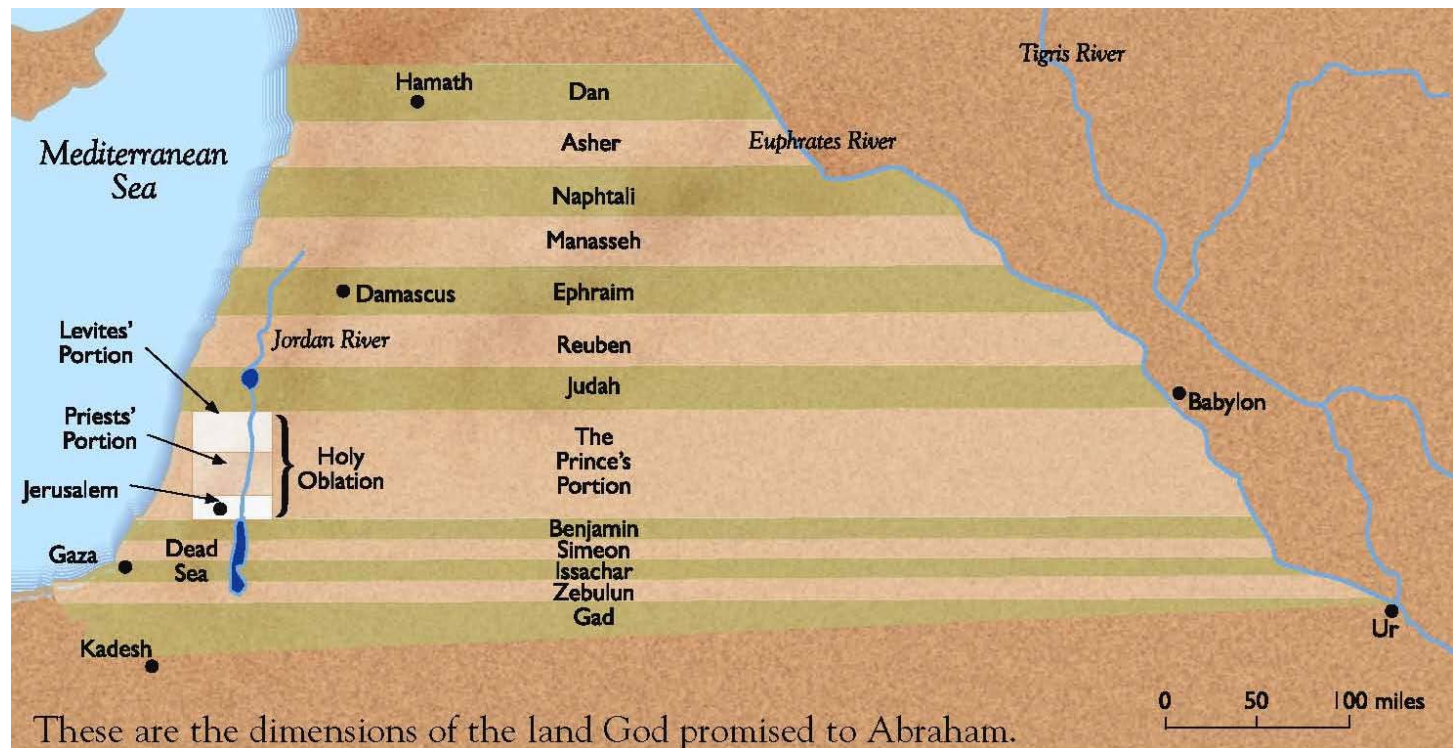
will be built after Jesus returns. And keep in mind that the Bible says that when the Second Coming occurs, there will be the greatest earthquake in history — one that will impact the entire world (Revelation 6:12-17 and Revelation 16:18-20). Every island will be moved. Mountains will be lowered, plains will be lifted, and the topography of Jerusalem will be drastically changed (Zechariah 14:10). So, there is no way that Cornuke can prove that these verses are talking about the Gihon Spring.

The fact that the topography of Jerusalem is going to be radically revised is attested to by the size of the Millennial Temple that is described in Ezekiel 40-48. Bible prophecy expert Dr. John C. Whitcomb describes it this way:¹¹



The area of the Temple courts (500 x 500 “reeds,” or about one square mile) would be larger than the entire ancient walled city of Jerusalem, and the holy portion for priests and Levites (20,000 x 25,000 reeds, or about 40 x 50 miles) would cover an area six times the size of greater London today and could not possibly be placed within present-day Palestine, that is between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea (Ezekiel 47:18), to say nothing of the “portion of the prince” on either side of this area (Ezekiel 45:7, 47:21). The Millennial Jerusalem would be about 40 miles in circumference and thus ten times the circumference of the ancient city. Furthermore, it would be somewhat north of the present site of the city, and the Temple area would be about ten miles north of that, on the way to Samaria!

The map below shows the size of Millennial Israel and the gigantic size of the Temple area. As you can see, the Temple area will be so big that it will extend over the Jordan River as it exists today.¹²



It is true that the Temples required a lot of water for the cleansing of the sacrificial altars. But that water was supplied by an aqueduct that Solomon built about 950 BC. It transported water to the Temple Mount from the Spring of Atan which was located near Bethlehem.¹³

The Stones

One of Cornuke's cornerstone arguments that he emphasizes repeatedly is that Jesus prophesied that the entire Temple complex would be destroyed to the point that “not one stone will be left upon another” (Matthew 24:2). He then points out that the retaining walls of the Temple Mount remain standing to this day. Therefore, he concludes that the Temple could not have been

located on the Temple Mount. In contrast, he points out that nothing is left of the Temple in the City of David.

This argument is nothing but hot air. Jesus did not prophesy the destruction of the Temple complex, and the reason there is nothing left of the Temple in the City of David is because it was never there.

You can find Jesus' prophecy in three places: Matthew 24:1-2, Mark 13:1-2 and Luke 21:5-6. In all three places it is very clear that His prophecy relates only to the buildings on the Temple Mount and not to the retaining walls around the Mount. Consider Matthew 24:1-2 —

1) Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.

2) And He said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.”

As you can clearly see in this passage, the prophecy relates to the Temple **buildings**, and not the retaining walls.

The Coin

Cornuke makes a big deal out of a coin that archaeologists found at the base of the southwest corner of the Temple Mount retaining wall. He says the coin was dated 20 AD and it proves that the walls were not completed by that date. He concludes that the western wall was not built by Herod, and therefore Herod's Temple could not have been located on the Temple Mount.

The fact of the matter is that the construction of the Temple complex continued long after King Herod's death. John 2:20 says that the building of the Temple complex took 46 years — until about 27 or 28 AD. And recent archaeological excavations have revealed that although the Western Wall, where Jews pray

today, was built in Herod's lifetime, the southwest corner of the Temple Mount where the coin was found, was not completed until around 30 AD.¹⁴ In fact, Josephus reports that the Temple complex was still receiving further embellishments and repairs right up to the time that the First Jewish Revolt broke out in 66 AD.¹⁵

The Debris

One important point that Cornuke overlooks is that there is tons of debris on the east and west sides of the Temple Mount. This rubble was piled up when the Roman soldiers pushed the stones of the Temple buildings off the top of the Temple Mount.

This debris is so deep that when people stand at the Western Wall (or "Wailing Wall") today, they are actually standing 50 feet above the base of the wall where a street was located in the time of Jesus. On the eastern side of the Temple Mount, the debris is so deep that it covers the top of the ancient Eastern Gate which exists directly below the present gate.

This leads to a crucial question: If the Temple Mount was the location of the Roman fortress, why did the Roman soldiers tear down their own fortress and then go to the enormous trouble of pushing the remains over the top of the Temple Mount? It just makes no sense.

wall. The only open space is the Western Wall where Jews go to pray, and it is considered to be a sacred and untouchable area. But excavations have been conducted at the southwest corner of the Western Wall. The photo below shows that corner and some of the huge stones that were pushed off the top of the Temple Mount.



This is a photo of the eastern wall of the Temple Mount, taken from the Mount of Olives, looking west over the Kidron Valley. The red line starts at the southeast corner of the Temple Mount retaining wall, and as it moves to the right (north) it rises steeply, indicating the amount of debris that is piled up against the wall. The arrow points to the current Eastern Gate which is located on top of the ancient gate.

Excavations

Since 1967, when the Israelis reconquered the Old City in the Six Day War, they have excavated the southern end of the Temple Mount. They found the steps leading up to the entrance to the Temple complex. And they uncovered huge ceremonial baths (mikvahs) which were used for spiritual cleansing before entering the Temple.

The discovery of these baths solved a mystery that appears in Acts chapter 2. That chapter records the first Gospel sermon that the Apostle Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost — a sermon he presented on the Temple grounds. We are told that 3,000 responded to the sermon and were baptized. Scholars have always wondered where that many people could have been baptized in Jerusalem. Now we know.

The Israelis have not carried out excavations on the east side of the Temple Mount because a Muslim cemetery is located there. The graves are located on top of the tons of debris that is piled up against that wall.

On the west side, they are unable to conduct excavations because buildings have been built over the debris right up to the

In the midst of the rubble that has been left at the southwest corner of the Temple Mount is a stone that is inscribed with the words, "To the place of trumpeting." It marks the spot at the top of the Temple Mount where the priestly trumpeter would have stood to sound the trumpet signaling the beginning and end of Sabbath days and festivals. This stone clearly indicates that the Temple Mount was a Jewish sacred place, and not the site of a Roman fortress.



The trumpeting stone.

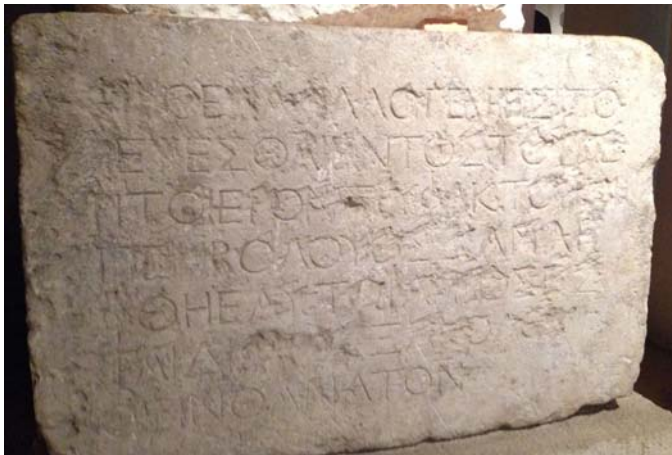


An artist's very accurate rendition of Jerusalem at the time of Solomon. The original City of David is at the bottom. The Ophel is right above it. This is the incline that leads up to the Temple Mount. The Temple is shown on Mount Moriah. The steep ravine on the right is the Kidron Valley. The Mount of Olives is to the right, across the Kidron Valley. The shallower valley on the left is the Tyropoeon Valley. (Source: [http://theworldnewsmedia.org/2010%20Watchtower %20Library%20Maps](http://theworldnewsmedia.org/2010%20Watchtower%20Library%20Maps).)

Warning Signs

Something Cornuke did not mention in his book is that two warning signs have been discovered that clearly indicate the Temple was located on the Temple Mount. These are signs that warned that non-Jews could not cross the stone balustrade that separated the sacred Temple area from the Court of the Gentiles. These signs are mentioned in the writings of Josephus.¹⁶

The first of these signs carved in stone was found in 1871 near the Lion's Gate located at the northeastern corner of the Temple Mount, nowhere near the City of David. A second one was discovered in the 1930's near the same location.¹⁷

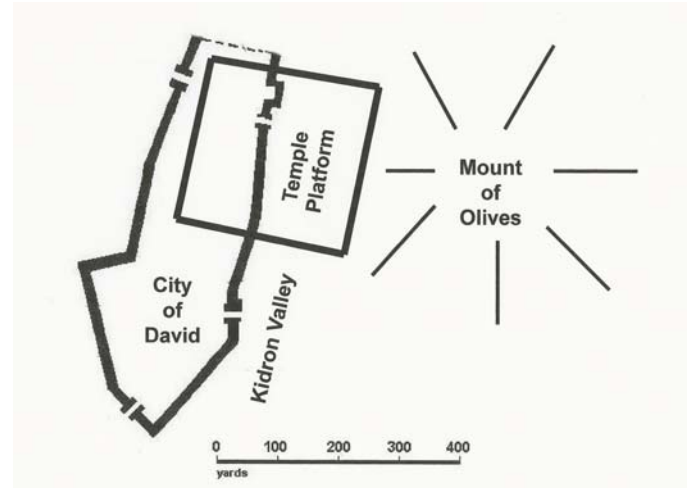


The Temple warning stone that is now in the Museum of the Ancient Orient in Istanbul, Turkey.

The Size

One of the most devastating arguments against Cornuke's theory relates to the size of the Temple platform on which the Temple sat. According to both Josephus and the Mishnah (a collection of rabbinical oral traditions), the Temple platform was 500 by 500 cubits in size. The cubit used by Solomon was the long royal Egyptian cubit which was 20.67 inches long.¹⁸ That would make the Temple platform 861 feet square.

There is simply no way that this platform could have fit in the City of David. Again, the City of David was a tiny village when David conquered it. It consisted of only 13 acres and was 400 feet wide by 1,800 feet long. The placement of a temple platform 861 feet square in the village would look like the diagram below.



As you can see, the Temple platform would have stuck out over the deep Kidron ravine, hanging in the sky! In Cornuke's book, he has some drawings he commissioned showing the Temple sitting in the City of David, but they are very misleading because they are not drawn to scale.

Concluding Thoughts

Cornuke offers some other arguments in behalf of his theory, but I have covered all the main ones.

I think it is important to note that the leaders of the Temple Mount Institute in Jerusalem are the world's leading experts on the Jewish Temples. They have spent their lives studying the ancient manuscripts related to the Temple, and their conclusion is that "... there is no doubt that the Dome of the Rock is the location of the First and Second Temples ..."¹⁹

One of Christendom's foremost experts on the Temples, Randall Price, agrees with this conclusion. He further observes, "... while evidence of the First Temple's construction is scarce ... evidence for the Herodian Second Temple is replete, both in the original documentary sources and the archeological remains."²⁰ And he then points out that the Bible explicitly states that the Second Temple was built on the foundation of the First (Ezra 2:68 and 9:9).

The cover of Cornuke's book has a superscription above the title which reads: "Could History Be So Stunningly Wrong?" The answer is a resounding "No!" ❖

(Reference notes for this article are included with the version that is posted on our website at www.lamblion.com.)

Temple Denial

Dr. David R. Reagan

Most people are familiar with Holocaust Denial — the assertion that the Holocaust is a myth conjured up by the Jews to create sympathy and support for the Jewish people. But few seem to be aware of a similar anti-Semitic concept called “Temple Denial.” It is the claim that no Jewish Temple ever existed in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount.

This idea circulated among Muslims for many years, but it did not become well known until the year 2000 when Yasser Arafat proclaimed to President Clinton at the Camp David Summit Conference that “Solomon’s Temple was not in Jerusalem, but Nablus.”¹ This bizarre claim was picked up by the press and was circulated worldwide. Two years later, Arafat again asserted that there was “not a single stone proving that the Temple of Solomon was there [in Jerusalem] because historically the Temple was not in Palestine at all.”² Then, to everyone’s amazement, he claimed it was located in Yemen and that he had personally visited the site!

Despite the fact that Arafat was neither an historian or an archaeologist or a student of the Bible, his insane assertion spread like a wild fire across the Muslim world, and since that time, it has become a “fact” in Muslim thinking.

What makes this particularly strange is that there is a long history of Muslim affirmations that the Jewish Temples were located on the Temple Mount.

For example, Sura 17:1 in the Quran tells about a miraculous night journey of Mohammed from the “Sacred Mosque” in Mecca to the “Farthest Mosque,” whose location is not identified. No mosque of any kind existed in Jerusalem during Mohammed’s lifetime, yet over the years, Muslim commentators have claimed that it was located in Jerusalem. What is relevant to Temple Denial is the fact that an 11th Century Muslim historian and a 14th Century Iranian religious scholar both claimed in their writings that the mosque was the Al-Aqsa Mosque (which sits on the Temple Mount today) and that the mosque “was built on top of Solomon’s Temple.”³

An almost identical affirmation of the Jewish Temples being located on the Temple Mount can be found in the guidebooks to the Dome of the Rock that were published by the Supreme Muslim Council in Jerusalem, beginning in 1924. All of them contained the following statement:⁴

The site [of the Dome of the Rock] is one of the oldest in the world. Its sanctity dates from the earliest (perhaps from pre-historic) times. *Its identity with the site of Solomon’s Temple is beyond dispute.* This, too, is the spot, according to the universal belief, on which David built there an altar unto the Lord, and

offered burnt offerings and peace offerings (2 Samuel 24:25).

This statement was contained in all of the guidebooks up to and including the one published in 1950. But after 1950, the statement was inexplicably removed from subsequent issues.⁵

Today, Temple Denial has become an integrated part of Palestinian mythology, affirmed by politicians, clerics and scholars. Together with the equally absurd claim that Jesus was a Palestinian, an attempt is being made to erase the Jewish presence from the history of the land.

As far back as 1973, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia proclaimed on Radio Riyadh that “the Jews have no connection whatsoever with Jerusalem and have no sacraments there. They claim that the Temple of Solomon is there . . . [but] the Temple of Solomon does not exist in Jerusalem.”⁶

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is both a Holocaust Denier and a Temple Denier. He had this to say about the Jewish Temple: “. . . they [the Jews] claim that 2,000 years ago they had a Temple. I challenge this assertion that there ever has been a Jewish Temple. But even if so, we do not accept it . . .”⁷ How’s that for logic?

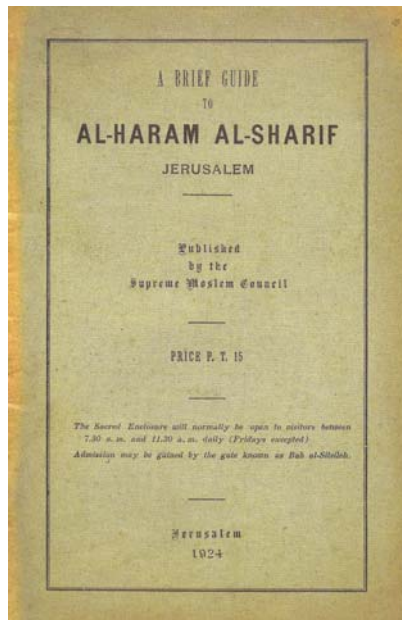
Walid Awad, former director of publications for the PLO, stated in December 1996 that the Jewish Temple was probably located in “Jericho or somewhere else.”⁸ The Palestinian Authority’s chief religious official, Taissir Tamimi, has stated, “I know of Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, but I don’t know of any Jewish holy sites in it.”⁹

A Palestinian academic, Dr. Issam Sisaleem, Professor of Middle East History at the Islamic University of Gaza, has asserted that Solomon’s Temple never existed. He has further stated that the idea of such a Temple “is the biggest lie in history by those liars [the Jews].”¹⁰ A few years later, he added, “There is no historical text that proves the existence of Solomon’s Temple, or that it has a real history, other than the Bible, and the Bible . . . was based on ancient legends.”¹¹

In November of 2014, the PLO’s Department of National Affairs issued a warning to journalists not to use the term, “Temple Mount” when describing the site of the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.¹² The reason for this demand: “The Al-Aqsa Mosque compound is not a disputed territory and all other terms, therefore, are null and void.”

All of these Alice-in-Wonderland statements are simply part of a propaganda campaign to divorce the Jewish people from their historic capital city. And all their hot air is a total waste of time because the Bible makes it clear that a Third Temple will be built in Jerusalem on the same location as the first two — and that will be on the Temple Mount (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, Revelation 11:1-2 and Revelation 13:6). ❖

Note: The reference notes for this article are posted with the version that appears on our website.



The 1924 Islamic guidebook to the Temple Mount which affirms that the Jewish Temples were located on the Mount. “Al-Haram Al-Sharif” is the Islamic name for the Dome of the Rock. It means, “The Noble Sanctuary.”

A Difficult Question: Why Do The Ungodly Succeed?

Dennis Pollock

(Editor's note: This is a very insightful article about one of the greatest problems that Christians wrestle with. I urge you to read it carefully and give it much thought. The author was an Associate Evangelist with Lamb & Lion for 11 years before he decided to form his own ministry of evangelism called Spirit of Grace. It is aimed primarily at the people of Africa. You can find the ministry on the Internet at www.sogmin.org.)



Dennis Pollock

We who are Christians have learned to give God the glory for any and all success we may experience. Although we may have worked hard and given ourselves totally toward that success, we know that we didn't achieve our goals through our diligence alone. We understand that it was God's grace that sustained us, enlightened us, and provided all that was necessary to bring our plans and dreams to fruition. In recognizing this we are in full harmony with the psalmist who declared:

For they (Israel) did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, nor did their own arm save them; but it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance, because You favored them. (Psalm 44:3)

Not only do we give God the credit for our successes, but we love it when we hear others do so, especially when they are celebrities. Who of us hasn't been thrilled to hear an athlete, after a winning effort in the Super Bowl or World Series, say something like, "I want to give thanks to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Without Him this never would have been possible." We may suppose that it was because this person prayed, stood on the promises of God in the Scriptures, and went into the contest with his heart overflowing with faith, that he was able to triumph.

A Difficult Problem

The problem with all of this is that Christians aren't the only ones who achieve major successes in this life. For every football player on the winning team who is an evangelical Christian, there are probably nine others who are not.

Many of the highly successful athletes drink, carouse, and live utterly immoral lives when they are not on the field. When they are interviewed they do not give glory to God. Flushed with success and the adulation of their fans, they are way too full of themselves to even think about God, and attribute their success to hard work, good luck, and being much smarter than the other guys.

This is problematic for many Christians. We would like to suppose that when you pray, stay humble, and confess the Scriptures you succeed, and when you neglect these things you will

surely fail.

But many sinners do not fail. Many men and women who never pray, never touch the Bible, and give God no serious consideration succeed masterfully in their careers, often rising far higher than their evangelical counterparts. Sometimes we ignore this and pretend it does not exist, but any serious scrutiny of life in our world reveals that it is so.

An Example

Steve Jobs was an excellent example of this. Jobs was a brilliant man with a great eye for creating beautiful computer products with simple, elegant lines. He was also a genius in marketing his products. With his company, Apple Incorporated, he first revolutionized the computer industry, and then proceeded to do the same thing with the telephone and music industry. iMacs, iPhones, iPods, and iPads saturated the U. S. and many other parts of the world, and created a hysterical feeding frenzy with every new offering.

Jobs became a millionaire at 21 and a multimillionaire soon after that. In time his millions turned into billions. The college dropout became one of the wealthiest, most influential, and successful business leaders in the world.



Steve Jobs

Steve Jobs was no Christian. As a teenager he asked his pastor if God knew about the starving children he had seen on the cover of Life Magazine. His pastor assured him that God knows everything. Jobs angrily replied, "Well, I don't want to have anything to do with that God," and never returned to church. Eventually he adopted a Buddhist philosophy, and summed up his feelings about religion by saying that all religions lead to the same house, and that sometimes he believed that house existed and sometimes he didn't.

What this means is that Steve Jobs accomplished all that he did without prayer (at least not from a Christian perspective) without reading the Bible, without faith in God, and without ever claiming any promises from the Bible . . . In addition, from most accounts he was a mean, driven CEO that instilled such fear in his employees that many shunned getting into an elevator with him. Gracious, kind, gentle, and compassionate were words never used to describe Apple's passionate and obsessed CEO. And yet he was more successful — enormously, fantastically successful — than most praying, God-fearing, Bible-reading Christians could ever dream.

Steve Jobs is an extreme example but we see similar folks

all the time in a miniature version. Our world is filled with people who do very well, achieve great success in their fields, live in beautiful houses, drive expensive cars, eat out at fine restaurants, have lots of friends and admirers ... and have no use for God whatsoever.

The harsh and shocking reality is this: it is very possible to live a godless life, never praying or acknowledging God, and still succeed quite well in your career — and sometimes even in your relationships. How can this be?

An Ancient Dilemma

This issue troubled Job exceedingly. In one of his long complaints, he asks:

Why do the wicked live and become old, yes, become mighty in power? Their descendants are established with them in their sight, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear . . . They spend their days in wealth . . . (Job 21:7-13)

Similarly, the psalmist Asaph was troubled over this matter, and wrote: “As for me, my feet had almost stumbled . . . I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked” (Psalm 73:2-3). From Asaph’s perspective, seeing wicked men doing very, very well in life is no small thing. It was almost enough to make this godly man fall away from God.

To understand this mystery, we must recognize that God has created our world with a great many “built-in” laws, and these laws apply to sinners and saints equally. In the physical realm, if a Christian and an atheist wander off the side of a cliff, they will both fall to the bottom with equal velocity. The Christian will not land softly in the arms of angels while the atheist slams into the rocks and is killed . . . Being born again through faith in Christ does a great many things for us, but it does not change the physical laws of our world, or suspend them when we behave foolishly.

The Law of Diligence

God has fixed things so that when we work diligently and consistently we tend to succeed, and when we apply ourselves half-heartedly we tend to fail. Proverbs says, “He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich” (Proverbs 10:4). To which diligent people does it refer? Diligent Christians? Diligent Buddhists? Diligent Hindus? Diligent Australians, Canadians, Chinese?

The answer is all of these, and every other category of men and women you can name. Diligence nearly always tends toward prosperity and laziness toward lack. Suppose you have a situation in an office where two men are up for promotion. One is a Christian and the other has no use for God. The Christian goes to church, reads his Bible, prays that he will get the promotion — but is lazy and almost never puts in a full day’s work. The other man curses and goes to dirty movies, but at the office he works harder, longer, and smarter than anyone there, including the boss. You can guess which man will get the promotion!

Another reason God allows the ungodly success is that He has determined to give our world the appearance of randomness.

“True success is living a life that pleases the Heavenly Father and fulfills the purposes for which He created us . . .”

Should He cause praying Christians to always succeed, and sinners to fail miserably in every endeavor, it would make things way too obvious. People would be drawn to God for good luck and prosperous lives rather than out of a respect for God’s holy character and the righ-

teousness of His ways.

God calls those who love Him to walk by faith and not by sight, and this means being forced to endure that nagging question of why arrogant, lying, pushy, sexually immoral, unlikeable men and women sometimes rise to the very top of their professions, and why godly praying, Christians who diligently try to live their lives to please their Heavenly Father sometimes don’t.

Real Success

Part of our problem is that we often fail to grasp the true definition of success. Our view of success and God’s are radically different. True success is living a life that pleases the Heavenly Father and fulfills the purposes for which He created us, starting with being born again through faith in Jesus Christ.

In fact, the perfect example of success was Jesus Christ Himself, who said to the Father in His high-priestly prayer of John 17: “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4). Jesus was never a rich man. He never moved in the circles of the influential leaders of Israel. He never took a step outside the boundaries of despised, little Israel. He never led an army, invented a labor-saving device, ruled a nation, or even a province.

And yet He was the ultimate success, and His life, death, and resurrection are the only hope our darkened, sick world has ever seen. Jesus reveals to us that success has nothing to do with how much money we make or how many powerful men sing our praises. Real success has everything to do with God.

Jesus said: “Without Me you can do nothing.” This is hard for us to process. It means that all the famous movers and shakers, all the glamorous singers and entertainers, all the outstanding athletes and impressive sounding politicians who do what they do without Jesus are, in effect, doing nothing. And one day, all their success, all their wealth, all their fame, and all their popularity will be stripped from them as their lives come to an end. Asaph came to understand this, and his worries about the prosperity of the wicked were resolved. He wrote:

When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me — until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! (Psalm 73:16-19)

Our ultimate success is knowing Jesus Christ. And having found Him ourselves, it is now our job to tell others how they can know real success, the kind that endures not only through this life, but throughout all eternity. For “what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?” ❖

Was the Bethlehem Innkeeper a Schmuck?

Nathan Jones

How astounding that nearly 700 years before Jesus was born the Prophet Micah (5:2) prophesied the exact city the Messiah would be born in — Bethlehem Ephrathah! Every Christmas I read the wonderful story of that little town, but am always puzzled by the infamous inn. Luke 2:1-7 reads:

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world . . . And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem . . . He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (NIV)

What irony that the King of kings was turned away by the little town of Bethlehem's local establishment! Certainly the unnamed innkeeper didn't know the Messiah had just shown up at his doorstep, but what kind of person turns away a woman giving birth? Sure, the inn could have been filled to capacity, but could anyone be so heartless? Was the innkeeper, to use a Jewish colloquialism, a schmuck?

The Scriptures are silent about there even being an innkeeper, but we can assume an inn must have one. The Bible is also silent about the character of this person. To track down just what kind of man or woman this was, the character of the innkeeper can be determined based on the definition of what an inn was in Bible times.

1) If the inn was a hotel, the innkeeper was a schmuck. Ask any Westerner to picture an inn and they'll most likely describe a building with 10-100 cube-like rooms all tended by a front desk person who supplies coarse towels and magnetic swipe cards. This could have been what the Bethlehem inn was like (minus the cards), for Jesus describes a similar inn while telling the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10.

If the Bethlehem inn was this type of hotel, then the innkeeper was indeed a schmuck. Even if he actually did not have any rooms available, he must have had at least a private room he could have lent to a poor young woman deep in the pangs of labor. Maybe he heard Joseph's Galilean accent begging for mercy and a bit of prejudice crept into the innkeeper's thinking. Nevertheless, the cretin sent the poor family away to retreat to an open stable filled with smelly animals in order to give birth to their first child. Great guy!

2) If the Inn was a house, the innkeeper was indifferent. Because the Greek word for "inn" in Luke 2:7 is *kataluma*, a Western-style hotel was most likely not the setting for Bethlehem's inn. *Kataluma* has a number of meanings. One in particu-



lar is used of the Upper Room where the Last Supper was held. If this is a truer description of a Bible-times inn, then it was not a hotel, but a private residence. Families were all returning to their ancestral homes due to the census, so the *kataluma* could very well have been Joseph's own extended family's house and the innkeeper the patriarch.

Family town homes in Jesus' day consisted of two-story structures. The family slept in the large upper room while the animals were brought onto the lower floor for heat and protection. That there was no room in the inn could well have meant that Joseph's extended family were all occupying the upper room, leaving Mary to give birth downstairs among the animals. If this is the true scenario, then Joseph's family were the real schmucks for not giving up some space upstairs and the patriarch/innkeeper was merely indifferent to the dire needs of yet another extended family member crowding his home.

3) If the Inn was a courtyard, the innkeeper was generous and shrewd. Although *kataluma* could mean an upper room of a house, in essence it is defined as "a loosing down place." Such places were widely known throughout the Middle East as caravan rest stops. This type of inn would have been more like a campground surrounded by a stone wall that incorporated stall slots and provided areas to pitch tents.

If the Bethlehem inn was such a campground, then the thought of Mary giving birth out there in the open among the crowds of tents would have been just awful for any woman to contemplate. The innkeeper would have been sensitive to this lack of privacy and generously moved Mary far up into the hills to the caves where he kept his animals. This also would have made the innkeeper shrewd because he could still make a little extra money renting out his personal stable, the mark of a true Jewish businessman.

That the inn was a courtyard is the most likely scenario out of the three possibilities, for the hills of Bethlehem are filled with limestone caves. Justin Martyr in the 2nd Century AD stated that Jesus was born in one of those caves and Emperor Constantine built the Church of the Nativity over the widely accepted cave.

Since the historicity of the Bethlehem inn was most likely a courtyard, then the benefit of the doubt can be given to the innkeeper. History can go easy on this person for generously giving Mary the seclusion she would greatly desire.

The verdict? The label, schmuck, should not be granted to the innkeeper.

The story is a terrific reminder that we need to be prepared when the Lord sends our way a chance to serve those in need, or we may miss out on one of God's amazing Christmas miracles.✠

The Forgotten Promises of Christmas



The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. This church is located on the traditional site of the birth of Jesus. (Photo: BiblePlaces.com)

Dr. David R. Reagan

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus this year during the Christmas season, let's remember the promises that were made to Mary when she was visited by the Angel Gabriel:

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and
bear a son,
And you shall call His name Jesus.
He will be great, and will be called the Son
of the Most High;
And the Lord God will give to Him the throne
of His father, David,
And He will reign over the house of Jacob
forever;
And of His kingdom there will be no end.
— Luke 1:31-33

Seven Glorious Promises

This magnificent statement contains seven promises. Four of them relate to the First Advent of the Lord:

- 1) Mary would conceive a child.
- 2) Mary would give birth to a son.
- 3) The son would be great.
- 4) The son would be called "the Son of God."

All four of these prophecies were fulfilled in the life of Jesus. Mary did conceive (Matthew 1:18-20) and bear a son (Matthew 1:25). His name was called Jesus (Matthew 1:21). He was great (Luke 7:16), and He was called the Son of God (Matthew 16:16, Matthew 27:54, and Mark 1:1).

The last three promises which Gabriel made to Mary have not been fulfilled. They relate to the Second Coming of Jesus:

- 5) He will be given the throne of David.
- 6) He will reign over the house of Jacob.
- 7) There will be no end to His kingdom.

I call these three promises the "forgotten promises" of Christmas because they are not taught by most churches in Christendom today. That's because most churches take the position that Jesus will never return to this earth to reign. This is called the Amillennial viewpoint.

Promises Spiritualized

The Amillennial view is based upon the supposition that the Bible does not mean what it says. To substantiate the viewpoint, its proponents are forced to spiritualize Scripture.

Thus, in their interpretation of the last three promises made to Mary by Gabriel, they convert the throne of David into the throne of God and the house of Jacob becomes the Church. They then conclude that the promises have been fulfilled in the current

reign of Jesus from His Father's throne over His Church.

The Throne of David

There is no doubt that Jesus is currently reigning from His Father's throne over His kingdom, the Church. But to identify that reign with the one promised to Mary takes a great leap of imagination.

The "throne of David" is not the throne of God. The throne of God is in Heaven. The throne of David is in Jerusalem (Psalm 122:5).

Jesus Himself clearly differentiates between the throne of God and His own throne in Revelation 3:21. In that verse, Jesus says that He will one day allow believers to sit with Him on His throne just as His Father is currently allowing Him to share His throne.

Jesus is not on the throne of David today. He is sitting at the right hand of His Father, on His Father's throne. He will occupy the throne of David when He returns to earth to reign from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (Isaiah 24:21-23).

The House of Jacob



This silver star in the basement of the Church of the Nativity supposedly marks the place where Jesus was born.

The "house of Jacob" is not the Church. This is an Old Testament term for the children of Israel (Exodus 19:3). The Church is never referred to in Scripture as the house of Jacob.

The Bible teaches that a remnant of the Jews will one day accept Jesus as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10, Romans 9:27, and Romans 11:25-26). This will occur at the end of seven years of terrible suffering called the Tribulation, or "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7).

When Jesus returns at the end of that time of suffering, the Jewish remnant will be gathered to the land of Israel and will be made the foremost nation in the world (Ezekiel 37:11-28 and Zechariah 8:22-23). Jesus will then rule over the house of Jacob.



***The Annunciation of Gabriel to Mary*
by Philippe de Champaigne, 1644.**

The Eternal Kingdom

The current Church kingdom is not an everlasting kingdom. The Church Age kingdom will end with the Rapture of the Church.

The Church kingdom will be followed by the Millennial kingdom when Jesus will reign over all the earth from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-4). That kingdom will last one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-7).

The final, Eternal kingdom of Christ will be established on a new, perfected earth (1 Corinthians 15:24 and Revelation 21:1-8).

Believing God's Word

Why can't we accept the promises made to Mary to mean what they say? The first four meant exactly what they said. Why must the last three be spiritualized? The only reason for spiritualizing them is to force them to conform to some preconceived doctrine.

I believe God knows how to communicate. If God had intended to promise Mary that her Son would reign from Heaven over the Church forever, He would have said so. Instead, He reaffirmed to her the promise He had made many times through the Old Testament prophets that His Son would reign from David's throne in Jerusalem over Israel and that He would be given a kingdom that would last forever (Isaiah 9:6-7 and Ezekiel 37:21-28).



***"His Name Shall Be Called Wonderful"* by Simon Dewey**

If the promises God made to the Jews did not mean what they said, then how can we be sure that His promises to the Church mean what they say? I believe God means what He says.

A Christmas Hope

During this Christmas season I am going to praise God for sending His Son to die for my sins.

I am also going to pray that God will soon send His Son again to fulfill the "forgotten promises" which Gabriel made to Mary. I thank God that He never forgets a promise. ✚

The Bethlehem Miracle

A Testimony to God's Faithfulness

Dr. David R. Reagan

Every year at Christmas time I am reminded of the remarkable prophecies concerning the birth of Jesus and how they substantiate His deity and the faithfulness of God. Let's take a look at some of those prophecies.

The Timing of the Birth

The timing of the Messiah's birth had been indicated in Genesis 49:10 in words spoken by Jacob on his deathbed to his son Judah: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah . . . until Shiloh comes, and to Him shall be the obedience of the peoples."

The term "Shiloh" was recognized by the Jewish rabbis as a Messianic title. The "scepter" refers to the judicial power of the nation. Thus, this prophecy states that the nation's judicial power will be removed shortly after the Messiah comes.

Although Judah was deprived of its national sovereignty during the 70 year period of Babylonian captivity, it never lost its scepter, for the Jews were allowed to have their own judges even while in captivity.

Josh McDowell, in his book, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, points out that "the first visible sign of the beginning of the removal of the scepter from Judah came about when Herod the Great, who had no Jewish blood, succeeded the Maccabean princes who belonged to the tribe of Levi and who were the last Jewish kings to reign in Jerusalem."

The crucial turning point came soon after Herod's death when, in about 7 AD, the Romans removed the power of the Sanhedrin Council in Judah to pronounce the death penalty. Thus the scepter (the supreme judicial power) passed from Judah.

What the Jews did not realize was that Jesus the Messiah had been born around 4 BC during the last years of Herod (Matthew 2:1), so "Shiloh" had arrived shortly before the scepter departed — just as prophesied!



The Annunciation by James Tissot (1896).

The Place of the Birth

The place of the Messiah's birth had also been precisely prophesied five hundred years earlier by the prophet Micah: "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel" (Micah 5:2).

Have you ever wondered what the term, "Ephrathah," means in this passage? It is a geographical designation to indicate precisely which Bethlehem is being identified. It's like differentiating between Springfield, Missouri and Springfield, Illinois.

The point is that there was another Bethlehem in the land of Israel in the area to the north near the Sea of Galilee. It had been allotted to the tribe of Zebulun.

By specifying the area of Ephrathah, the prophecy of Micah made it clear that the Bethlehem that would host the birth of the Messiah would be the one in the south of Israel near Jerusalem. In fulfillment of this very precise prophecy, Matthew tells us that "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea" (Matthew 2:1).

The Nature of the Birth

It had also been prophesied that the special child born in Bethlehem would be both human and divine. Daniel emphasized the Messiah's humanity when he referred to Him as "the Son of Man" (Daniel 7:13). Isaiah stressed His divinity when He said that the Messiah would be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

His divine nature was also indicated in other prophecies about His birth. For example, the first Messianic prophecy in the Bible is one spoken by God Himself in the Garden of Eden when He told Satan that he would one day be defeated by the One who would be born of "the seed of woman" (Genesis 3:15). This seems to be a clear indication that the Messiah would be born miraculously through a virgin. Thousands of years later Isaiah specifically prophesied that the birth would occur in this manner: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child and bear a son . . ." (Isaiah 7:14).

It was further foretold by Isaiah that the Messiah would be given a name that would signify His divinity. He will be called "Immanuel," said Isaiah, which means "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14).

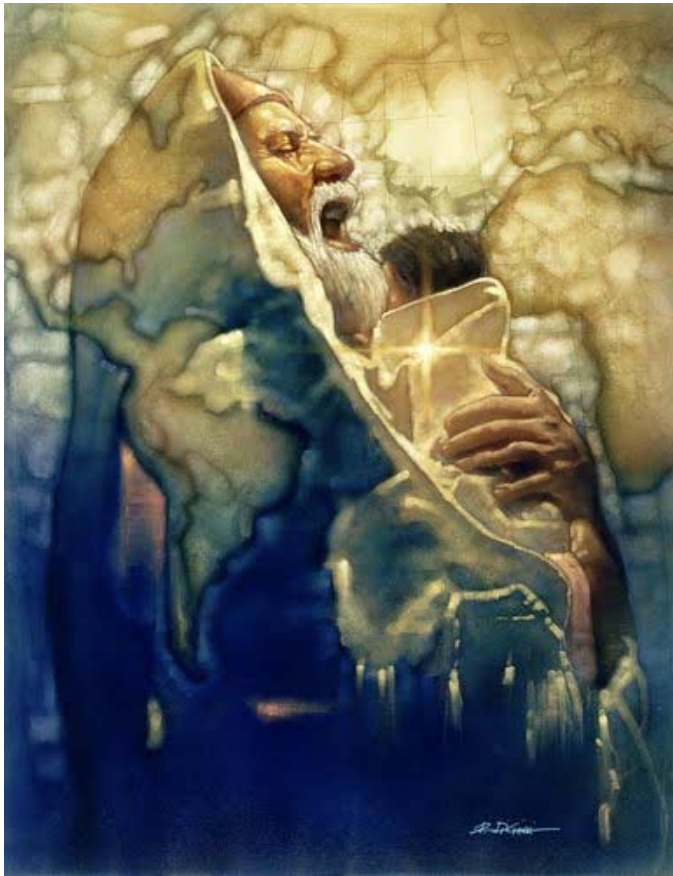


The Nativity by Carlo Maratta (1625 - 1713).

14). Six hundred years later when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her that she would be the mother of the Messiah, he specified that she was to name the baby Yeshua (Luke 1:31). That name in Hebrew means “God’s Salvation” (Matthew 1:21).

Other details prophesied about the Messiah’s birth included the presentation of gifts to Him by kings (Psalm 72:10-11 and Matthew 2:1-12), the slaughter of the infants of His birthplace (Jeremiah 31:15 and Matthew 2:16), and His sojourn in Egypt (Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:11-15).

The Celebration of the Birth



Simeon's Moment by Ron DiCianni (Luke 2:25-35).

The conception and birth of the Messiah were celebrated in some remarkable prophetic hymns. Mary prophesied in a song of rejoicing that the child she had conceived was evidence that God’s “mercy is upon generation after generation” (Luke 1:50). She went on to prophesy that He would “scatter the proud,” “bring down rulers,” “exalt the humble,” and “fill the hungry” (Luke 1:52-53).

Her relative, the priest Zacharias, also sang a prophetic song of celebration when his son, John the Baptist, was born. Referring to the baby in Mary’s womb, he proclaimed that God “has raised up a horn of salvation for us” (Luke 1:69). He then declared that his own son would be called “the prophet of the Most High,” and he prophesied that his son would “go before the Lord to prepare His ways” (Luke 1:76). He concluded his song with one of the most beautiful poetic prophecies concerning the Messiah that can be found anywhere in Scripture: “Because of the tender mercy of our God . . . the Sunrise from on high shall visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:78-79).

The next prophetic song of celebration was sung on the night of the Messiah’s birth when an angel appeared to the shepherds of Bethlehem and proclaimed: “Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11). That angel was suddenly joined by a multitude of angels who sang a triumphant chorus: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased” (Luke 2:13-14).

The final prophetic song related to the Messiah’s birth was sung by a “righteous and devout” man of Jerusalem by the name of Simeon. The Holy Spirit had come upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die before he saw the Messiah (Luke 2:25-26). He was given that glorious privilege forty days after the Messiah’s birth when the parents of Jesus came to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate their baby to God.

Simeon took the Christ child in his arms, thanked the Lord, and then sang: “My eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples — a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel” (Luke 2:30-32).

The Significance of the Birth Prophecies

The fulfillment of all these prophecies in the life of one person, Jesus of Nazareth, is proof positive that He was who He said He was, namely, the Messiah of God (Mark 14:62 and Luke 22:70).

God’s faithfulness in fulfilling each of these prophecies in detail is also significant because it gives us assurance that He will likewise faithfully fulfill all the prophecies He has given to Christians regarding the soon return of Jesus.

A God of Prophecy



Adoration of the Magi Andrea Mantegna (1432-1506).

Our God knows the future and has the audacity to proclaim it (Isaiah 46:10). He also has the power to see to it that what He proclaims will come to pass (Isaiah 46:11). Most important, He is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9), so we can rest in His promises. Let’s rejoice that the Bethlehem birth so long ago is proof positive that the One born there will soon return in glory as the King of kings and the Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16).✚

The Great Convergence FIZZLE

Dr. David R. Reagan

The September 2015 issue of Charisma magazine featured stories on its cover about Bible prophecy. Collectively, they were billed as “The Great Convergence.”

I was glad to see a major Christian magazine feature Bible prophecy on its cover. Unfortunately, most of the articles in the magazine were devoted to sensationalist nonsense like the Blood Moons, the Shemitah, and Newton’s Riddle. These articles reflect a type of prophetic fanaticism that gives the whole field of eschatology a bad reputation.

The Blood Moon Theory pointed to September 28 as a crucial date. The Shemitah Theory singled out September 23. And Newton’s Riddle also focused on September 23. Thus, the “convergence” featured on the magazine’s cover.

All of this proved to be “much ado about nothing.”

That was no surprise to me because it was all based on human speculations rather than biblical prophecies.

Take the Blood Moons for example. In an article we published in the *Lamplighter* issue of March-April 2014, I concluded that the whole Blood Moon Theory was devoid of any factual basis. The author of the theory, Mark Biltz, pointed out that four blood moons in a row over a two year period of time (called a tetrad) is a very rare phenomenon which has occurred only 87 times since the time of Christ. Even rarer is when these four blood moons fall on Jewish feast days. That has happened only eight times since the First Century.

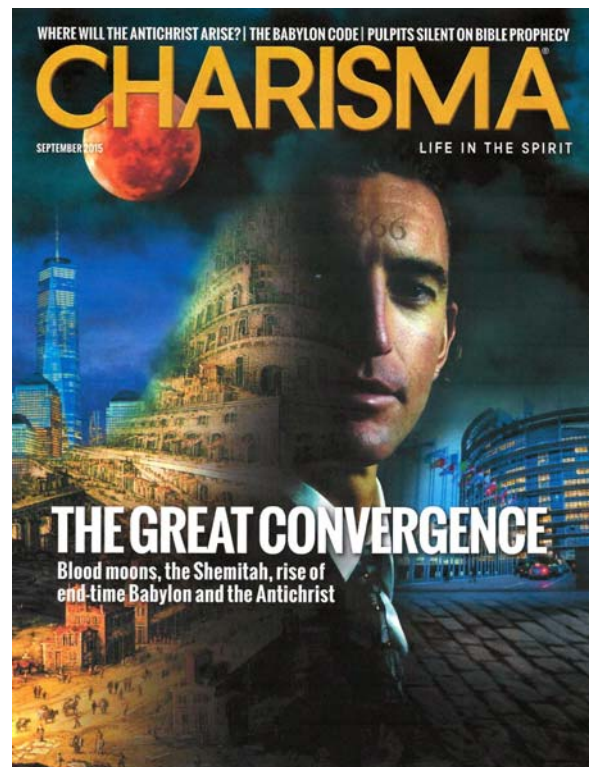
Biltz claimed that the last three of the feast tetrads had served as omens of major events among the Jewish people, and therefore he concluded that the next one, scheduled for 2014-2015, would serve as a warning of a major event in Israel.

Now stop and think about this for a moment. The first five feast tetrads had no prophetic significance whatsoever. And what the proponents of the theory conveniently overlooked is that two of the last three really had no significance as omens of anything. The one that occurred in 1493-1494 came *after* the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. And the one in 1949-1950 also came *after* the re-establishment of Israel in 1948.

That leaves only the feast tetrad of 1967-1968 as having any significance since the Six Day War began and ended after the first blood moon in that sequence.

So, in fact, only one out of eight feast tetrads have had any prophetic significance. That’s not a good track record. And keep in mind that when you say “something important is going to happen” in Israel during any two year period of time, you are not going out on much of a limb. Nor is it true prophecy to speak so vaguely. The prophecies contained in the Bible are very specific and precise.

And then there is the ridiculous “prophecy” called Newton’s



Riddle. Sir Isaac Newton, the great 17th Century scientist, interpreted Daniel’s prophecy of the 70 Weeks of Years (Daniel 9:25-27) to mean that the Tribulation would begin 49 prophetic years (360 day years) after Jerusalem is re-established as the capital of Israel. That occurred on June 7, 1967, and 17,640 days later (49 years x 360 day years) would be September 23, 2015, the Day of Atonement.

The problem is that Newton’s interpretation of Daniel’s prophecy completely scrambles it. Daniel speaks of seven weeks of years (49 years) followed by 62 weeks of years (483 years) followed by one week of years (7 years). To come up with his calculation, Newton decided to place the 49 years after the 483 years when there is absolutely no contextual justification for doing so.

That leaves us with Jonathan Cahn’s Shemitah Theory for the crash of the American economy on September 23. As I pointed out in an article in the January-February 2015 issue of the *Lamplighter*, Cahn’s first error was to take a law given to Israel only (Leviticus 25:20-21) and apply it to a Gentile nation. His second error was his arbitrary decision to start his count of Shemitah years in 1917 when the Balfour Declaration was issued rather than 1948 when the nation of Israel was re-established.

He obviously chose 1917 because it enabled him to place the Shemitah years at a couple of times when the stock market crashed. In other words, his calculation of Shemitah years is manipulated. Further, one of the Chief Rabbis of Israel has declared that the Shemitah law will not even start applying to Israel again until more than half of the world’s Jews have returned to that nation.

The lesson from all this is that we need to focus our attention on the end time prophecies of the Bible and not on the fanciful speculations of men. ❖

Apostasy —

The United Church of Canada is one of Christendom's most liberal churches. It was the first to approve same-sex marriage and the ordination of homosexual pastors. In 1998 it elected one of its ordained pastors, Bill Phipps, to head up the church. In a press conference following



Gretta Vosper

his election, he proceeded to deny all the fundamentals of the faith, including the deity of Jesus. He also proclaimed that he did not believe that Jesus is the only way to God. When an astonished reporter asked what, if anything, did he believe, he responded: "It's an irrelevant question." Now the church is trying to decide what to do with a female pastor named Gretta Vosper. The problem? She has declared that she is an atheist! She recently stated in an open letter that "Belief [in God] has led to innumerable tragedies throughout the timeline of human

history and will continue to do so until it fades from our ravaged memory." One wonders why the UCC hesitates to take quick and decisive action to defrock her. Is it because the Church, like Bill Phipps, no longer believes anything?

Meanwhile, a Presbyterian pastor in Beaverton, Oregon has joined the chorus by proclaiming himself to be a "Belief-less Christian." His name is John Shuck, and he recently wrote on an Atheist blog that "God is a human product as opposed to special revelation from a divine being."

How can a person claim to be a Christian and deny the deity of Jesus, His resurrection and His claim to be the only road to God? The answer is simple: It is impossible. Just read 1 Corinthians 15. It's equivalent to the person standing in a garage and declaring himself to be an auto.

Christian Persecution —

The Rankin County School District in Mississippi was fined \$7,500 by a federal judge because a Christian minister prayed during a district-wide honors assembly and because the district allowed the Gideons to pass out Bibles to 5th graders. The judge ordered the district to stop "proselytizing Christianity." Who would ever have believed that one day our nation would penalize people for praying and passing out Bibles?

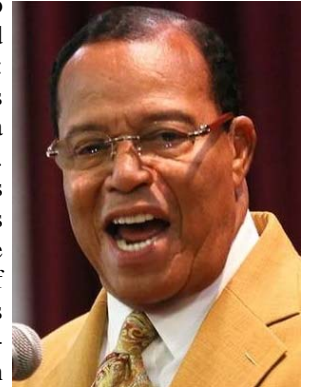
Thomas Banks, an engineer with the Ford Motor Company was fired from his job for calling homosexuality "immoral." The company posted an article to its employees about its updated policies to become more LGBT friendly, and it invited people to respond with their comments. Banks wrote: "For this, Ford Motor Company should be thoroughly ashamed. Endorsing and promoting sodomy is of benefit to no one. This topic is disruptive to the workplace and is an assault on Christians and morality as well as antithetical to our design and our survival. Immoral sexual conduct should not be a topic for an automotive manufacturer to endorse or promote." Why did the company ask for comments? And why is Ford tolerant toward seemingly any viewpoint about sex except the Christian view?

TIMES and Seasons

Racism —

Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam organization, spewed out his vehement racism recently in a diatribe which he delivered in Miami at the Zion Missionary Baptist Church. He brashly proclaimed that he is

looking for 10,000 volunteers to kill white people! "I want 10,000 fearless men," he said, "who say death is sweeter than continued life under tyranny." He added: "Death is sweeter than watching us slaughter each other to the joy of a 400 year old enemy. Death is sweet. The Quran teaches persecution is worse than slaughter." The press would go nuts if a radical white leader were to call for the killing of 10,000 blacks. Why has the press been silent about Farrakhan's demand? And why was Farrakhan speaking at a Baptist Church? He is not only a racist, he is also a Muslim. And yet, almost every time he goes to a major metropolitan area, he is hosted by a black Baptist church. Why are black pastors elevating race above Christ? And why are they endorsing a racist who hates both whites and Jews?



Louis Farrakhan

Multiculturalism —

On August 1, 2015 an image of the Hindu goddess, Kali, was projected on the Empire State building in New York City. Kali is the goddess of death and destruction.



On the left, a picture of the Goddess Kali. On the right a photo of the goddess image being projected on the Empire State Building.

The light show event was supposed to display images of endangered species of animals. Why the Goddess Kali was projected as the last image was not explained. The press raved about what a wonderful exposition it was. Wonder what they would have said if the show had ended with the projection of an image of Jesus?

Papal Insanity —

In July, while on tour of South America, Pope Francis announced in Ecuador that God had called him "to revise the most sacred of texts, the Ten Commandments." ❖

Quick Thoughts —

“The world is growing gloriously dark.” Former pastor Adrian Rogers (1931 - 2005).

“The Bible is not a spiritual buffet where you can choose what you please.” — Robert Jeffress, Pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas.

“The culture war is at its heart a religious war about whether God or man will be exalted.” — Pat Buchanan, syndicated columnist.

“Everyone who favors abortion has already been born.” — President Ronald Reagan.

“I have never understood the idea that we as Christians are to obey the law, but we are to leave the lawmaking to pagans.” — Tim Wildmon, President of the American Family Association.

“A woman shall not wear man’s clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman’s clothing, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God.” — Moses in Deuteronomy 22:5.

“The chief danger that confronts the coming century [20th] will be religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, and heaven without hell.” — William Booth (1829 - 1912), founder of the Salvation Army.



Food for Thought

Things You Never Hear in Church —

“Hey! It’s my turn to sit on the front pew!”

“I was so enthralled, I never noticed your sermon went 25 minutes overtime.”

“Personally, I find witnessing much more enjoyable than golf.”

“I’ve decided to start tithing 15%.”

“Let’s forget the denominational minimum salary and pay our pastor so he can live like we do.”

“I love it when we sing songs I have never heard before.”

“Since we’re all here, let’s start the worship service early.”

“Pastor, we’d like to send you to a Bible seminar in the Bahamas.”

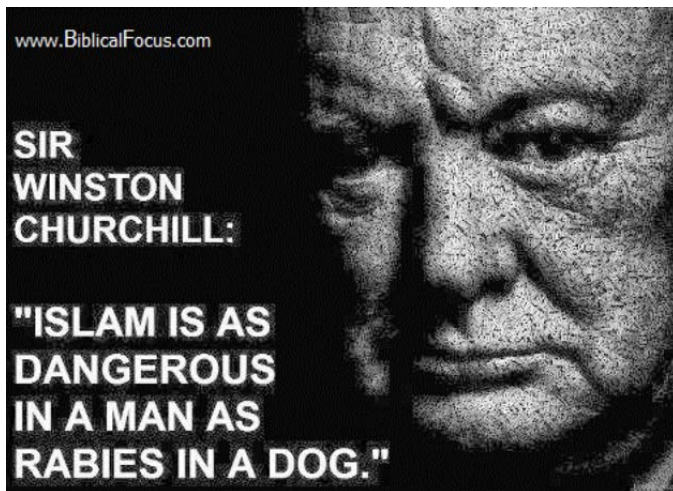
Smiles —

Pastor Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Church in Dallas was talking about the Signs of the Times that point to the Lord’s soon return. He kept emphasizing that the signs indicate that we are living on borrowed time. He illustrated his point with this story:

A little boy went to visit his grandparents. They had a grandfather clock that kept awakening him in the night when it would peal out the hours. The clock malfunctioned at midnight, ringing 13 times instead of 12. The little boy panicked, jumped out of his bed and started running through the house yelling, “Wake up! Wake up! It’s later than it has ever been before!”

Two Jehovah’s Witnesses knock on a door and are greeted by a very hospitable man who invites them in and offers them something to drink. They thank him and have a seat. When he returns with their drinks, he asks, “What do you want to talk about?” They look at each other, shrug their shoulders and then one of them says, “We don’t know. We have never gotten this far before!”

Revival —



“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” — Corrie ten Boom (1892 - 1983), Dutch Christian speaker and author.

“Preach the Gospel every day; if necessary, use words.” — Francis of Assisi (1181 - 1226), Italian Catholic friar.

“I am only one. But still, I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something.” — Edward Everett Hale (1822 - 1909), American author, historian and Unitarian minister.

“Sin brings a temporary benefit with long-term regret.” George Swinnock (1627–1673), English pastor.

“Help me, Lord, to learn that what temptation offers, it takes back exponentially.” Wayne Stiles, Vice President of Insight for Living Ministries.

Television Update

Thanks!

We want to thank all of you who contributed so quickly and generously to match our \$50,000 TV challenge grant. Because of your generosity, we were able to raise the matching funds in only three months time, between June and August. These funds will enable us to stay on budget regarding our television expenses.

In August, Dr. Reagan flew to Detroit to make two television programs with Rexella Van Impe. Her husband, Jack, had heart surgery in March and suffered major complications afterwards. He is scheduled to return to the program in October. The two guests before Dr. Reagan were Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Church in Dallas and Erwin Lutzer, the pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago.



Dr. Reagan and Rexella Van Impe enjoy a laugh together while videotaping two television programs.

Dr. Reagan recently videotaped an interview with Kelly Shackelford, the president of The Liberty Institute, which is the largest law firm in America that is devoted entirely to the defense of Christian liberties.



Dave with Kelly Shackelford of the Liberty Institute.

The law firm is headquartered in Plano, Texas, a suburb of Dallas. Dr. Reagan began the interview by saying, "When I was

growing up in the church in the 1940s and 50s, an organization like yours would have been unthinkable. Today, it is indispensable. What happened?" Kelly took it from there and presented a very hard-hitting survey of Christian persecution in America today. He also gave an overview of what his law firm was doing to protect individual Christians, churches, church-related colleges and ministries.

Please pray for our television outreach. Pray that we will reach many souls for Jesus. Pray too for the Lord to supply our financial needs. We are currently spending \$22,800 per week for broadcast costs, and that does not include the cost of production.

Many TV ministries, if not most, are product driven, and they pay their costs through sales. That is not the case with us. We rely on donations from those who believe in and support our message. We offer resource materials for sale, but sales are a small part of our annual income.

Thanks for your support in prayer and in donations! ❖

National Networks:

Daystar — Wed. 6:00pm CT, DirecTV 369, DISH 263, Cable, AT&T U-verse 563, Broadcast Stations, World Satellites, & Web Streaming (daystar.com).

TBN — Tue. 3:30 CT, DirecTV 372, DISH 260, Cable, AT&T U-verse 560, Broadcast Stations, World Satellites & Web Streaming (www.itbn.org).

TCC (The Church Channel) — Sat. 8:30pm CT, DirecTV 371, DISH 258, Broadcast Stations, World Satellites, & Web Streaming (churchchannel.tv).

NRB (National Religious Broadcasters) — Sun. 4:00pm CT, DirecTV 378 & Web Streaming (<http://nrbnetwork.tv>).

WHT (LeSea World Harvest TV) — Sun. 6:00pm CT, DirecTV 367, DISH 217, AT&T U-verse 578, Galaxy Satellite 15 & Web Streaming (leseas.com/wht).

Regional Networks:

Family Vision Network — Sun. 12:30am CT, Mon. 8:30am, and Wed. 7:00pm, Three Broadcast Stations and Cable throughout Southern Louisiana.

KSCE — Sun. 10:30am MT, Broadcast Station in El Paso, TX. DirecTV & DISH Local 38, Cable, AT&T U-verse 38, & Web Streaming (ksce.tv.com).

Internet Networks:

Our programs are available on demand on these websites.

HisChannel — HisChannel.com

LightSource — LightSource.com

YouTube — YouTube.com/user/ChristinProphecy

Vimeo — Vimeo.com

GodTube — GodTube.com via LightSource.com

DailyMotion — (European equivalent of YouTube.) DailyMotion.com/us

Lamb & Lion Ministries — LambLion.com

Jesus is the Reason

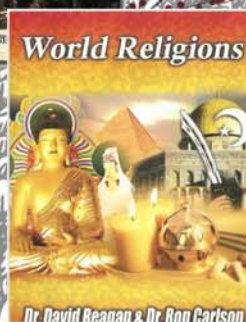
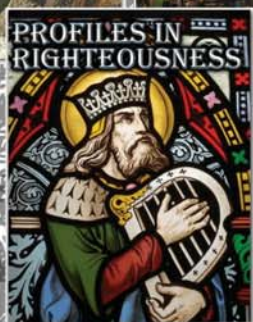
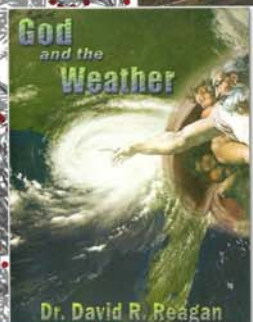
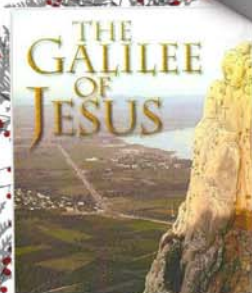
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Another Neat Christmas Gift

Each year since 2009 we have published a Holy Land calendar featuring 13 beautiful scenes in Israel. The first year we used watercolors that were done by Cathy Smith, the wife of one of our trustees. Since that time we have used photos — some by professional photographers and others by Dr. Reagan.

In some of the years we have featured a theme, like the Gates of Jerusalem, or Holy Land Churches, or the Galilee, or the Western Wall. Last year we chose a variety of scenes that were not related to a particular theme. We are doing that again this year.

Our 2016 calendar will feature photos of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, the Garden of Gethsemane, Nazareth, Independence Hall and the Negev Desert — among others.

The calendar includes notations of all major American and Israeli holidays. The cost is \$10, including the cost of mailing.



You can order the calendar through our website at lamblion.com or by calling 972-736-3567. ✚

Missions Update

God continues to use this ministry as a channel of His blessings to the Christian refugees in Nigeria. These are desperate people who are victims of Muslim terrorism at the hands of the notorious Boko Haram thugs who have recently affiliated with ISIS.

Thus far this year, we have sent a total of \$40,800 in refugee aid to Pastor Standfast Oyinna. He uses the funds to supply housing, clothes and food to the refugees. His office has been burned out twice by Boko Haram. The last time he lost his theological library and his computer. We have since provided him with sufficient funds to rent a new headquarters building and purchase a new computer. He is shown below with the computer he bought with the funds our supporters supplied.



We have had a relationship with Standfast for over 30 years. He is a devout Christian with a pastor's heart, and he is determined to stand his ground and not flee from Muslim violence. He always supplies us with detailed lists of his expenditures and also the receipts for them.

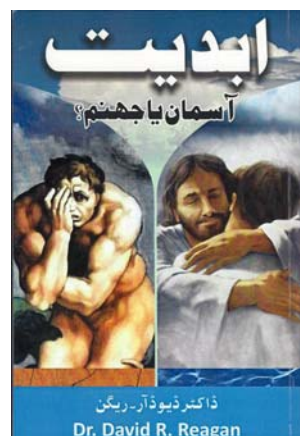
Standfast has had a lot of trouble with his legs. He has received medical treatment, and is doing better, but he still must walk miles every day to take care of all his duties with the refugees. His greatest need is for a second-hand car. Please pray for his health and safety. ✚

Another foreign ministry that we provide a lot of assistance to is one in Pakistan that is headed up by a wonderful man of God named Nazir Gill. Like Pastor Oyinna in Nigeria, Pastor Gill is under constant harassment from Muslim militants, and his life is always in jeopardy. He recently celebrated his 50th year in full-time ministry. The photo below shows him with members of his family at his celebration festival. He is the tall man in the brown suit.



Pastor Gill is fluent in several languages, and he has used that skill to translate and publish many of our books. On the right is his most recent publication. It is an Urdu edition of our book, *Eternity: Heaven or Hell?*

Pastor Gill constantly holds Bible prophecy conferences all over Pakistan, and he needs additional funds to publish our books, which he distributes free of charge to the pastors who attend the conferences. Pray for his safety. ✚



Ministry News

Events Schedule —

November:

Dr. Reagan at the Regional MJAA Conference in Grapevine, TX (1).

Nathan Jones at the Strategic Angel Care Orphans Ministry Banquet in Plano, TX (12).

Dr. Reagan at Grace Bible Church in Winchester, KY (13-15).

Dr. Reagan at the Brookhaven Church in McKinney, TX (29).

December:

Annual Lamb & Lion Trustee Retreat in McKinney, TX (4-5).

Annual Pre-Trib Study Group Conference in Dallas, TX (7-9).

January:

Dr. Reagan and Nathan Jones at the North Hialeah Baptist Church in Hialeah, FL (29-30).

Dr. Reagan at the Brookhaven Church in McKinney, TX (31).

New Book —

Nathan Jones has completed a new book with the help of a co-author, Steve Howell. It is an outstanding book about the 12 Minor Prophets and what their books have to say about living by faith. We are currently seeking a publisher for the book, and we hope to have it available for distribution sometime next year.

Israel Pilgrimages —

Our next pilgrimage to Israel is scheduled for June 18-29 (12 days). Our Assistant Evangelist, Tim Moore will host the trip. He is a Colonel in the Air Force Reserve, a commercial pilot, and an elected member of the Kentucky legislature. He has also been to Israel many times and was trained personally by Dr. Reagan to serve as a pilgrimage host. The tour will include all of Israel except the Negev Desert. The group will spend two nights in Tel Aviv, two nights in Tiberias (on the Sea of Galilee) and five nights in Jerusalem. If you are interested in this great spiritual experience, give us a call or send us an email message, and we will put you on a notification list to receive all the details as soon as they have been arranged.



Tim Moore at the Jordan River baptismal site.

Ministry Need —

Our current 2006 Dodge van is worn out. It has almost 200,000 miles on it, and it is no longer reliable. We need to replace it as soon as possible. To do so, we need to raise between \$30,000 and \$35,000 to cover the cost of a new van, plus tax, title and license. If you feel led to help us with this need, please designate your donation for "Van Purchase." Thanks!

Meetings and Conferences —

Evangelists Nathan Jones and Tim Moore are available for weekend preaching and teaching engagements. Consider inviting one of these men to speak at your church. You can find detailed information about Nathan and Tim on our website at www.lambion.com/about/staff.



Nathan Jones

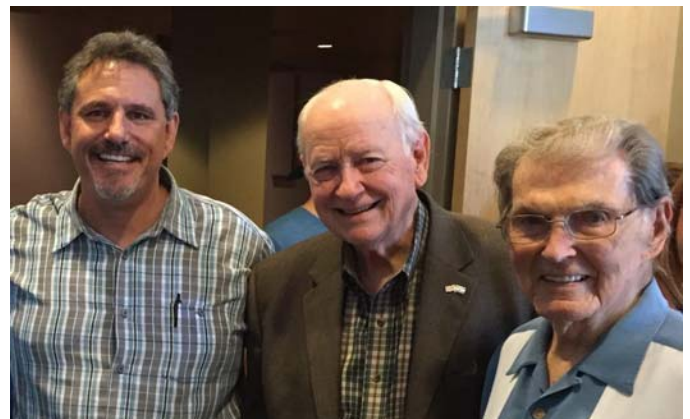


Tim Moore

Because of the illness of his wife, Dr. Reagan can usually accept only one speaking engagement per month, and he has to save these for large churches and conferences.

Two Great Conferences —

Dr. Reagan recently held two back-to-back conferences in California, one at Christ Community Church in El Centro and the other at the San Diego Worship Center. Both conferences were greatly blessed by the Lord. To Dr. Reagan's surprise, Tim LaHaye and his wife, Beverly, showed up at the El Centro conference. The San Diego conference was sponsored by Don Perkins' According to Prophecy Ministry.



Pastor Walter Colace of Christ Community Church in El Centro, California, Dr. Reagan and Tim LaHaye.



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Are You Perplexed by the Book of Revelation?

If so, then you need to get a copy of Dr. Reagan's book, *Wrath & Glory*. It provides an easy-to-understand, chapter-by-chapter explanation of the book. The chapters:

- 1) Understanding Revelation
- 2) Interpreting Revelation
- 3) Systematizing Revelation
- 4) Probing Revelation
- 5) Applying Revelation

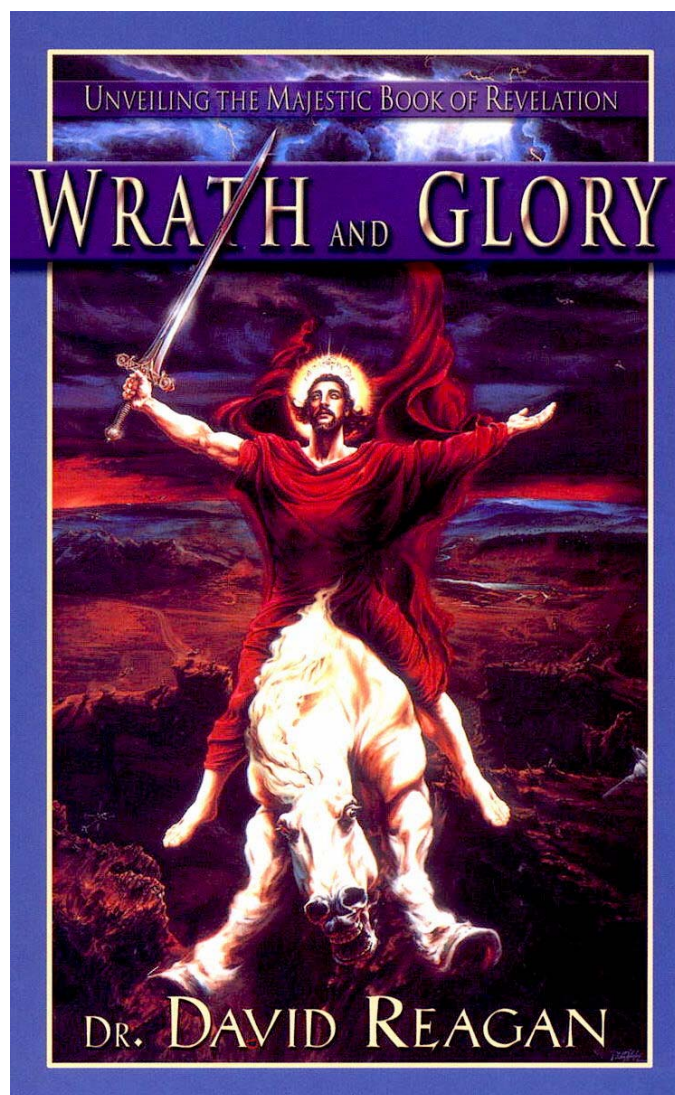
This book was written for the layman. It is designed to clear away the mystery of Revelation, showing what it means about the future while making it relevant to daily living in the present. The book contains many helpful charts and diagrams. It also has an annotated bibliography of resources pertaining to the book of Revelation.

Dr. Reagan's thesis is that the book of Revelation is not difficult to understand. Rather, it is difficult to believe, and if you will believe it, you will understand it.

The first chapter provides valuable keys to understanding the book. The second chapter provides an overview of the entire book, chapter by chapter. The third chapter explains how the events portrayed in Revelation relate to each other and to other end-time prophecies. The fourth chapter provides answers to the most frequently asked questions about Revelation. The final chapter presents lessons from Revelation that apply to Christian living, here and now.

This book has been translated and published in over ten languages, more than any other book that Dr. Reagan has ever written.

One of our supporters paid to have the book



published in Spanish, and it is available free of charge for only the shipping cost of \$5.

The English version sells for \$20, including the cost of shipping. The book contains 9 charts and diagrams. It runs 240 pages in length. You can order it through our website or by calling 972-736-3567, Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm Central time. ✚