

The background of the entire cover is a close-up photograph of a hand, likely Jesus's, with a visible nail wound on the palm. The hand is wearing a white, slightly worn robe. The background is a light-colored, textured surface with some brownish stains, possibly representing a stone slab or a wall.

LAMPLIGHTER

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

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The Resurrection of Jesus

Its Reality and Essentiality



Observations by the Editor

The Resurrection

The Resurrection of Jesus is one of the three greatest miracles of history — the other two being the Creation and the Incarnation.

The Resurrection is one of the most important facts that separates Christianity from all other world religions. The bodies of the founders of other religions — like Abraham, Mohammed, and Buddha — still rest in their graves, waiting the day of their resurrection. Only the tomb of Jesus is empty. He alone conquered death, and He alone lives today in a resurrected body.

Sixty-five years after His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos in His glorified body (Revelation 1:13-16). John was overwhelmed. He fell at the feet of Jesus as though he was dead. Jesus laid His right hand on John and spoke some of the most comforting words to be found anywhere in the Scriptures (Revelation 1:17-18):

Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Read that passage again. Savor it. It should calm your soul if you are a believer.

Jesus is saying, “Fear not, I am the beginning of history; I am the middle of history; I am the end of history; I am the meaning of history. I was dead, but now I am alive forever. I have conquered death, and because of that victory, I have been given the keys to death — the power to give life to those who have died with faith in Me.”

The words are reminiscent of what Jesus spoke to Martha before His death, as He stood with her before the tomb of her brother, Lazarus (John 11:25):

I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies . . .

Satan hates the Resurrection with a passion because it testifies to the fact that Jesus was who He said He was — namely, God in the flesh. Accordingly, Satan has done everything he can throughout



Dr. Reagan and the Ministry's Jewish guide, Shai-Shalom Matter, are shown above at the entrance to the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem.

history to undermine belief in the Resurrection, and he continues his nefarious assaults to this day.

Our lead article in this month's issue presents the evidence of the reality of the Resurrection. The second article shows how the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus precisely fulfilled the symbolic prophecy of Jonah.

The Date of the Resurrection

We cannot be certain of the exact year of the Resurrection, but we know from Scripture that it occurred on the Feast of First Fruits which was always held in Bible times on the first Sunday following Passover.

In the Fourth and Fifth Centuries the Church got caught up in a wave of anti-Semitism, and the Church decided to divorce Easter from the Jewish calendar. The church leaders set up a complicated formula for determining Easter day, and the result is that it does not always fall on the Sunday following Passover. This year it does. Passover falls on Tuesday, April 19th, and Easter will be celebrated on the following Sunday, April 24th.

The Name of the Day

I personally detest the term, Easter, because it is derived from the name of the pagan Teutonic goddess of Spring. I prefer the term, Resurrection Day, and I pray that each of you will have a blessed Resurrection Day this year on April 24th as you celebrate the victory of our Lord over death and His promise to give believers in Him the same victory.

Jesus lives! Hallelujah! ❖

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The Resurrection of Jesus

Its Reality and Essentiality

Dr. David R. Reagan

“Jesus said to her [Martha] I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies . . .”— John 11:25 (NASV)

There can be no certainty whatsoever about life after death unless Jesus was raised from the dead. Christianity stands or falls on the truth of Jesus’ resurrection, as does any hope of life after death.

The Testimony of Paul

The Apostle Paul made this point clear in his writings. When defining the essence of the Gospel, he wrote that it was the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

To make his point crystal clear, he added, “. . . if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain” (1 Corinthians 15:14). And then, as if to make certain to get his point across with no misunderstanding, he repeated his assertion, “. . . and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins” (1 Corinthians 15:17).

The Testimony of Jesus

Jesus Himself asserted that our hope of resurrection depended upon His own triumph over death. Sixty-five years after His resurrection, He appeared to the Apostle John on the island of Patmos and made this remarkable statement (Revelation 1:17-18):

Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I have the keys of death and Hades.

Think on that statement for a moment. Jesus is saying, “I am the beginning of history. I am the end of history. I am the meaning of history. And because I have overcome death, I have authority over death (the body) and Hades (the spirit).”

The Testimony of the Apostles

All the apostles recognized fully the significance of Jesus’ resurrection, and because of that, His resurrection became the focal point of their preaching.

Peter, in the first Gospel sermon ever preached, reminded his audience that King David had prophesied that the Messiah would be resurrected from the dead (Psalm 16:10). He then proclaimed that Jesus had fulfilled that prophecy: “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are witnesses” (Acts 2:32).

In Peter’s second sermon, delivered on the Temple Mount, He charged his audience with participating in the execution of Jesus by demanding that the “Prince of Life” be put to death, “the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses” (Acts 3:14-15).

Peter’s third sermon was delivered to the Sanhedrin Council, the very group of Jewish leaders who had condemned Jesus to death. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter bravely proclaimed, “. . . let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead . . . there is salvation in no one else” (Acts 4:10, 12).

Speaking of the boldness of the apostles in their preaching, Luke wrote, “And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus . . .” (Acts 4:33).

When all the apostles were arrested and hauled before the Sanhedrin Council and were threatened if they did not stop preaching, “Peter and the apostles answered and said, ‘We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross’” (Acts 5:29-30).

As Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was being stoned to death for his testimony of Jesus, “he gazed intently into Heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God’” (Acts 7:55-56).

When Peter was called to preach to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, he spoke of the crucifixion of Jesus, and then he said, “God raised Him on the third day, and granted that He should become visible, not to all people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us, who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead” (Acts 10:40-41).

When Paul was called and sent forth as a missionary (Acts 13:1-4), his sermons focused on the resurrection as the cardinal event of history, emphasizing that Jesus’ resurrection was a fulfillment of prophecy: “And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus . . . from the dead, no more to return to decay . . .” (Acts 13:32-34).



In Thessalonica Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue, “explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead . . .” (Acts 17:3).

At Athens, we are told that Paul “was preaching Jesus and the resurrection” (Acts 17:18).

And when Paul was arrested and brought before King Agrippa, he said, “I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead, He should be the first to proclaim light to both the Jewish people and to the Gentiles (Acts 26:22-23).

As you can see, over and over again the apostles affirmed the resurrection of Jesus and asserted that it is the heart of the Gospel.

Paul’s Letters

Accordingly, Paul began his profound theological epistle to the Romans by asserting that he was an apostle called to preach the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, “who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead . . .” (Romans 1:1-4). Later, in the same letter, Paul stated, “. . . that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved” (Romans 10:9). And when Paul wrote to his protégé, Timothy, he exhorted him in his teachings to “remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel” (2 Timothy 2:8).

In 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 Paul emphasized the validity of the Resurrection by recounting some of the appearances that Jesus made after His resurrection. He states that Jesus appeared to Peter and then to all the apostles, and that after that, He appeared to more than 500 brethren at one time. He also appeared to His brother, James, who later became the leader of the church in Jerusalem. Paul then reminds his readers that Jesus appeared to him, referring to his conversion experience on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9).

The Overall Significance

The overwhelming significance of the resurrection of Jesus is to be seen in the fact that it is an event that sets Christianity apart from all other world religions.

The Resurrection is the unique stamp of Christianity, for only Christianity can claim an empty tomb for its founder. No resurrection has ever been claimed for Abraham, Buddha, Confucius, or Mohammed. It is no wonder that Peter claimed that “our living hope” is based on “the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

I believe it was the great Bible teacher, Walter Martin (1928-1989), who once summarized the significance of the Resurrection with this observation: “The resurrection of Jesus Christ is



(iStockphoto)

either one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon the minds of men, or it is the most fantastic fact of history.”

The Empty Tomb

Let’s consider the evidence of the Resurrection, and in doing so, we must start with the fact of the empty tomb.

The Gospels tell us that Jesus was buried in the tomb of a wealthy man, Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57-60). Three days later that tomb was empty. It was empty despite the fact that it had been

sealed by a huge stone weighing close to two tons and despite the fact that it had been guarded continuously by Roman soldiers (Matthew 27:62-66 and Mark 15:43-46).

The Scriptures reveal not only the careful security precautions which were taken by both the Jews and the Romans, they also reveal that the Jews did not challenge the fact that the tomb was empty. That’s because the tomb was empty! They could not argue with that fact, so they manufactured a story to explain why it was empty. They paid the Roman guards of the tomb to say that Jesus’ disciples had stolen his body during the night while the guards were sleeping! (Matthew 28:11-14)

Again, the tomb was empty! No one could deny that fact. Liars had to be hired to provide an explanation.

A Modern “Explanation”

What’s worse is that men have been concocting silly stories ever since to try to explain away the resurrection of Jesus.

I experienced a startling explanation back in the 1980’s when I ran across an Easter sermon in the *Dallas Morning News* that had been preached by a seminary professor to a group of students at a university in Dallas. He argued that the disciples’ reaction to the crucifixion of Jesus was similar to what happened among the followers of Martin Luther King after his assassination.

He explained that as King’s followers sat around and reminisced about his speeches and their experiences with him, he became alive in their hearts. “That’s all there was to the Resurrection,” he told the students. “The memory of Jesus began to burn in the hearts of His disciples as they reminisced about Him.”

So the disciples of Jesus gave their lives to heart burn? Again, what total nonsense!

Other Explanations

Let’s consider some of the arguments against the Resurrection that have been offered throughout history. As we do so, I think you will sense that the shallowness of the skeptics’ arguments speak louder, in many respects, than the counter-arguments of Christians.¹

1) Confusion — Perhaps the silliest argument of all is that the disciples went to the wrong tomb! Yes, some supposedly learned men have proposed this theory over the years.

Yet, the Gospel accounts tell us that Mary Magdalene and

Mary, the mother of Jesus, both accompanied Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus to the tomb and watched them prepare the body for burial (Matthew 27: 56-61 and John 19: 38-42). Are we to suppose that when the women returned they could not find their way?

And even if they did get lost and looked in the wrong tomb, did Peter and John do the same thing? Did the Roman soldiers forget which tomb they were guarding? Did Joseph of Arimathea suddenly have a memory lapse as to where his tomb was located? And why didn't the Jewish leaders simply go to the right tomb and produce the body?

The answer is simple: the tomb was empty!

2) Theft — The oldest explanation of the empty tomb is the one the Jews made up and bribed the Roman soldiers to tell — namely, that the body of Jesus was stolen by His disciples. Yes, this explanation would have us believe that Peter, Andrew, James and John were body snatchers!

Now wait a minute. Are we really to believe that a small rag-tag band of followers who were scared witless at the arrest of Jesus and who fled into the night to save their own skins, suddenly found the courage three days later to take on a guard of Roman soldiers?

Even more significant, what would have been the motivation of the disciples to steal the body? We're told over and over again in the Scriptures that they did not understand that Jesus was to be resurrected (Mark 9:30-32). Their behavior after the crucifixion testified to this as they sat around in despair mourning the loss of their leader.

And yet, this very group suddenly came alive with hope and went forth boldly proclaiming the Resurrection at the risk of their lives. Are we really to believe that a group of frightened disciples could be transformed into a courageous band of fearless proclaimers by snatching a body, hiding it, and then committing their lives to a lie? That's more difficult to believe than the Resurrection!

3) Hallucination — One of the popular modern day theories has been the idea that the disciples experienced a series of hallucinations. As one advocate of this novel concept has put it, "They experienced a disruption of the physio-chemical structures of the brain in such a way as to be able to see what they desperately wanted to see."²

I will grant that Mary Magdalene might have had an hallucination. After all, she was a frightened and frustrated young woman wandering around in a cemetery at day break. As a matter of fact, the reaction of the disciples to her news of the empty tomb and her encounter with angels who informed her of the Resurrection indicates that they thought she had been "seeing things" (Luke 24:11).



Image by Waqar Daniel (Christian-Talk.forumotion.com)

But what about the appearance of Jesus to all the apostles on three different occasions, or His appearance to 500 believers on a Galilean mountain, or His ascension before a host of disciples? (1 Corinthians 15:5-7 and Acts 1:1-11).

An hallucination is a highly subjective experience and a very personal one. Like beauty, it is in the eye of the beholder. To believe that 500 people could have the same hallucination simultaneously takes more faith than a belief in the Resurrection! And furthermore, the hallucination theory does not explain the empty tomb.

4) Hypnosis — Another modern theory is that the disciples experienced mass hypnosis. The advocates of this idea argue that the disciples so desperately wanted Jesus to rise from the dead that they created an aura of auto-suggestion (or mental hypnosis) and thus, whenever the name of Jesus was mentioned, His disciples believed they could see Him.

Now, mass hypnosis is a probability, with even as many as 500 people, given precisely the right type of controlled environment and the proper mass medium like radio, television, or film. But mass hypnosis without some form of mass media, and without a professional hypnotist, and without ideal conditions, is utterly outside the realm of sound reasoning.

So, I ask you, how could 500 people in the open air of a country side, before the invention of mass media, and before the discovery of hypnosis, be subject to mass hypnosis? And how does this explain the fact of the empty tomb? I think it's obvious that the skeptics are grasping at straws.

5) Fainting — This leaves us with a centuries old theory that has been resurrected and popularized by an apostate Christian named Hugh Schonfield. It's called the "swoon theory."

This is the idea that Jesus really didn't die on the cross. Instead, He just passed out and then woke up three days later. Schonfield revived this idea in 1965 in his book called *The Passover Plot*.³

Mr. Schonfield would ask us to believe that after Jesus was scourged and crucified, and after He had laid in a cold, damp tomb for three days without food or water, He suddenly revived, removed His burial wrappings, rolled back the stone, and ran around the country side for 40 days without the benefit of even a dose of penicillin or a tetanus shot. Only a fool could believe such utter nonsense!

6) Nostalgia — There is one other theory that has become very popular among modern day liberal theologians. It is what I call the "nostalgia theory." It's the idea I mentioned earlier that the Resurrection occurred only in the hearts of the disciples.

Such a ridiculous concept is a natural outgrowth of liberal apostasy because it leaves them with the kind of Jesus they like — one who was only human. Their "messiah" turns out to be a

man who meant well, but who in reality was a deluded fool who thought he was God in the flesh.

This theory denies the well documented post-Resurrection appearances of Jesus, and like all the other theories, it fails completely to explain the fact of the empty tomb.

A Summary

The tomb of Jesus was empty. It was empty not because it was the wrong tomb. Nor was it empty because the body had been stolen.

The fact of the empty tomb was not based on hallucinations or hypnosis. It certainly was not based on daydreaming or wishful thinking. The tomb was empty! That is an historical fact.

But let me hasten to say that the greatest evidence of the resurrection of Jesus is not the empty tomb.

Powerful Evidence

The greatest evidence of the Resurrection in Scripture is to be seen in the transformed lives of Jesus' disciples. For within 50 days of His crucifixion, His disciples had been miraculously transformed from a defeated, frustrated, hopeless group of individuals into a confident band of Christian soldiers determined to win the world for their Lord.

Jesus' own brother, James, who did not believe in Him while He was alive, became the leader of the Church in Jerusalem. Peter, who denied Him three times in a fit of cowardice, began to proclaim Him boldly, even before the very Sanhedrin Council that had condemned Jesus to death (Acts 4:1-12). A young Christian by the name of Stephen gave his life for Jesus (Acts 7:51-60). And the most ruthless persecutor of the church, Saul of Tarsus, became the greatest missionary in the history of the church all because he encountered the risen Lord on the road to



The Resurrected Lord - Artist unknown. (Source: <http://st-takla.org>.)

Damascus (Acts 9:1-9).

I ask you, what more evidence could one demand?

The Most Convincing Evidence

Well, there is more evidence, and I consider it to be the most convincing evidence of all. I have in mind the way in which people's lives continue to be transformed today through their encounter with a living Jesus.

Have you met Him? Have you been born again by placing your faith in Him? Romans 10:9 says "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and

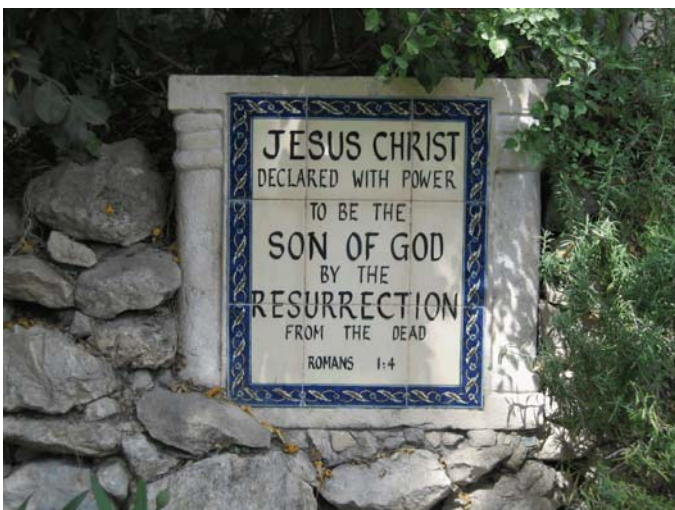
believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

Salvation is to be found in a personal relationship with a living Jesus. Here's how Jesus expressed it: "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

When one of Jesus' disciples named Thomas finally encountered Him after His resurrection, he cried out, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus replied, "Because you have seen Me you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (John 20:28- 29). I challenge you to believe in the risen Lord, "that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). ❖

Notes:

- 1) Much of the material in this article concerning the evidence of the Resurrection was gleaned from audio tapes of presentations made by Walter Martin in the 1970's. His daughter, Jill Rische, has made these tapes available on the Internet at www.waltermartin.com.
- 2) Gary R. Habermas, "Explaining Away Jesus' Resurrection: The Recent Revival of Hallucination Theories," www.garyhabermas.com/articles/crj_explainingaway/crj_explainingaway.htm#ch3.
- 3) Hugh Schonfield, *The Passover Plot* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1965).



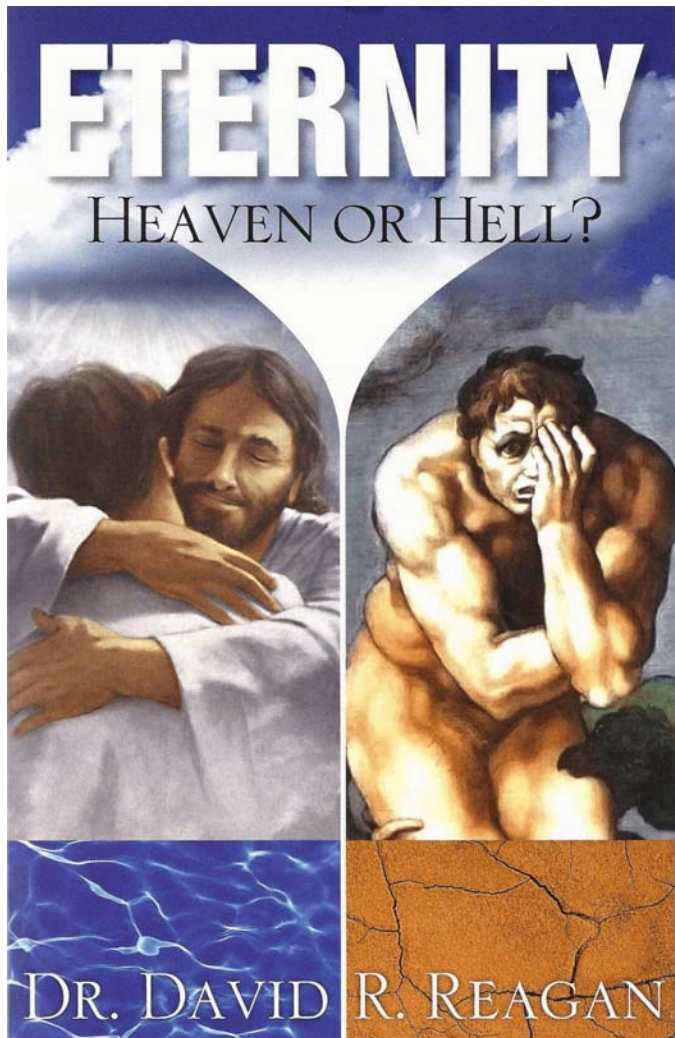
This sign appears at the entrance to the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem. (Photo by the author.)



This sign appears on the door of the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem. (Photo by the author.)

Dr. Reagan's Newest Book

The previous essay on the reality and essentiality of the Resurrection of Jesus was taken from Dr. Reagan's newest book, *Eternity: Heaven or Hell?* The essay is only part of a chapter devoted to a discussion of the Resurrection. The chapter also contains Dr. Reagan's answers to the most frequently asked questions about the Resurrection.



The book contains seven chapters:

- 1) What Happens When You Die?
- 2) What About Resurrection and Judgment?
- 3) What Will Heaven Be Like?
- 4) Is Hell For Real?
- 5) Are There Many Roads to God?
- 6) How Can We Be Certain Of Life After Death?
- 7) Are You Living With An Eternal Perspective?

Each chapter is followed by a series of the most frequently asked questions about the topic, with Dr. Reagan's answers.

The book runs a total of 197 pages and sells for \$15 plus the cost of shipping. To order, call 800-705-8316 between 8am and 5pm Central time, Monday through Friday. ❖

The "Jesus Tomb"

In February of 2007 Oscar-winning director, James Cameron (*The Titanic*), and his counterpart, Emmy award-winning documentary film maker, Simcha Jacobovici, held a press conference in New York to promote a film they had produced for the Discovery Channel entitled *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*.

Displaying some ossuaries (bone boxes) discovered in Jerusalem, they claimed that the boxes came from "the family tomb" of Jesus and that one of the boxes actually contained the bones of Jesus.

Needless to say, this announcement caused a sensation — not among the general public, but among professional archaeologists. The general public seemed to yawn and dismiss the whole show as nothing but a bunch of Hollywood hype. Archaeologists, on the other hand, reacted in fury. They were outraged that two amateurs who knew little or nothing about archaeology would have the audacity to make such absurd claims.

You see, the discovery was nothing new. The tomb and its contents were discovered in 1980 by some construction workers who were digging a foundation for a new building in Jerusalem. The find was immediately turned over to a team of professional archaeologists headed up by Professor Amos Kloner of Bar-Ilan University in Israel.

The tomb contained ten limestone ossuaries. Six of the ten had names scratched on them: Jesus the son of Joseph, Matthew, Jofa, Judah the son of Jesus, and two with the name of Mary.

Professor Kloner never made any attempt to associate this find with Jesus of Nazareth. His reasons were quite simple. First, the father of Jesus was a humble carpenter who could not have afforded a luxury crypt for his family. Second, the name of Jesus was so common among Jews in the First Century that it appears on 98 other tombs and 21 other ossuaries.

Professor Kloner responded to the claims of Cameron and Jacobovici by calling them "nonsense." "It makes a great story for a TV film," he said, "but it is impossible." He added:

There is no likelihood that Jesus and his relatives had a family tomb. They were a Galilee family with no ties to Jerusalem. This tomb belonged to a middle-class family . . . I refute all their claims and efforts to waken a renewed interest in the finding. With all due respect, they are not archaeologists.

There are other factors to be taken into consideration in evaluating the claims of Cameron and Jacobovici. For one thing, there is no historical record of Jesus ever being referred to by His followers as "Jesus, the son of Joseph." To His disciples He was "Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God."

Nor did His family live in Jerusalem. Their residence was 70 miles north in the village of Nazareth, located in the Galilee of Israel. At the time Jesus was killed, He was a pilgrim in Jerusalem — thus the necessity to bury Him in a borrowed tomb, not a family tomb.

Oh yes, there is one more point that should be made. Regardless of where the tomb of Jesus may be, we know for certain from the testimony of many eye-witnesses that it is empty. In short, no one is ever going to find the bones of Jesus. ❖

A Bible Prophecy Problem Concerning the Resurrection

Did the Resurrection fulfill the prophecy of Jonah?

Dr. David R. Reagan

The most significant prophecy in the Bible concerning the resurrection of Jesus is known as “the prophecy of Jonah.” It is a symbolic prophecy represented by the three days and three nights that Jonah spent in the stomach of a great fish (Jonah 1:17).

Jesus explained the prophetic symbolism of this unique event on an occasion when He rebuked the Pharisees for seeking a “sign” from Him. By a “sign,” they meant a miracle that would validate Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah.

The Prophecy’s Meaning

Jesus took their word and played with it by telling them that the only “sign” they would be given would be “the sign of Jonah.” Jesus then proceeded to explain what He was talking about: “for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:38-40).

Jesus clearly and distinctly prophesies here, using the example of Jonah, that He will spend three days and three nights in the tomb before His resurrection will occur.

This prophecy, like all Messianic prophecies, had to be fulfilled in the life of Jesus if He truly was the Messiah of God. Jesus emphasized this point Himself after His resurrection when He told His disciples, “All things which are written about Me in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44).

The Prophecy vs. Tradition

But was the prophecy of Jonah really fulfilled in the burial experience of Jesus? According to the traditionally accepted chronology of events, it was not!

The traditional chronology places the crucifixion on Friday morning and the burial on late Friday afternoon. It fixes the resurrection on Sunday morning. Thus, according to the traditional view, the body of Jesus was in the tomb only one full day (Saturday) and two full nights (Friday and Saturday). Jesus said His body would be in the tomb three days and three nights.

There have been many attempts to reconcile the problem that is raised here by the divergence between the prophecy and the traditional view of its fulfillment, but all the attempts I have read

have always fallen short of producing a true fulfillment of the prophecy. Jesus said all Messianic prophecy had to be fulfilled in Him, and I believe He meant every detail of every Messianic prophecy. Otherwise, it could be argued that He was not the Messiah.

The Source of the Problem

Let’s consider the events in the last week of Jesus’ life to see if we can find some clues that will solve the problem. Perhaps the best place to begin is with the problem itself. It is rooted in Mark 15:42 where it says that the crucifixion took place on “the day of preparation before the Sabbath.”

This verse has led most people to assume that the crucifixion took place on a Friday since the Jewish Sabbath is Saturday. And that assumption has in turn led to the conclusion that the crucifixion had to take place in either 30 or 33 AD because those are the only two years in the general time period of Jesus’ death when the day of preparation (14 Nisan on the Jewish calendar) fell on a Friday.

Peculiarities of the Jewish Calendar

A careful study of Jewish calendar practices will show that the assumption that the day of preparation in the year of Jesus’ death had to fall on a Friday is invalid! Such an assumption is based upon Gentile ignorance about Jewish feast days.

What the Gentile church has failed to recognize over the centuries is that the first day after Passover (15 Nisan) is a feast day, or “high day” because it is the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is therefore considered to be a Sabbath, regardless of which day of the week on which it falls. Read Numbers 28:16-18. Verse 18 clearly indicates that the first day after Passover, Nisan 15, is to be observed as a Sabbath — and so it has been throughout Jewish history to this day.

Now, the Gospel of John makes it clear that the Sabbath after the crucifixion was not a regular Sabbath. Rather, it was a feast day Sabbath, marking the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Consider the words of John 19:31 — “The Jews, therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.”

Solving the Problem

Again, the point of all this is that Jesus did not have to be killed on a Friday in order for His crucifixion to precede the Sabbath because there could have been two Sabbaths during the week of His crucifixion, depending on what day of the week the high feast day fell on. If it fell on Saturday, then there was only



one Sabbath. But if it fell on another day of the week, as it usually does, there would be two Sabbaths.

Take the year 31 AD for example. In that year the 14th of Nisan, the Passover day on which Jesus would have been crucified, fell on Wednesday, April 25th. The next day, Thursday, would have been the high feast day, and therefore it would have been a Sabbath.

Thus, if Jesus was crucified in the year 31, He would have been crucified on Wednesday and buried that evening before the high feast day Sabbath began. His body would have remained in the tomb for three days (Thursday, Friday and Saturday) and three nights (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday), just as He predicted. That means His resurrection would have taken place on Saturday evening, April 28th. To the Jew, that would place the Lord's resurrection on Sunday, the first day of the week, because the Jewish day begins at sundown.

The Crucial Clue

There is a clue in the Scriptures that the crucifixion week had two Sabbaths. In Mark 15:47 we are told that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James remained at the tomb after Jesus had been buried. In Mark 16:1 it says that the two of them

by William Whiston, the renowned translator of the writings of Josephus. In a very detailed appendix that he added to his translation, he uses both biblical and extra-biblical sources to determine the date of the last Jubilee year in Israel, before the Roman conquest in 70 AD. His conclusion was that it would have begun in the fall of 27 AD.¹

The date of 27 AD most likely marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry, for His ministry was a symbolic fulfillment of the Jubilee promises. This is indicated by the scripture that Jesus read in the synagogue in Nazareth when He launched His public ministry (Luke 4:16-24 & Isaiah 61:1-2):

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to
the poor.
He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set free those who are downtrodden,
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.

It is commonly agreed that the ministry of Jesus lasted 3½ years. A launching date in the fall of 27 AD to coincide with the beginning of the Jubilee would place His death in the spring of



The Resurrection is an oil painting by Ron DiCianni that is 40' long by 12' high. It took two years to paint. It was commissioned by the Museum of Biblical Arts in Dallas, Texas, and is on permanent display there. It depicts the moment that Jesus emerged from the tomb, surrounded by worshiping angels, fainted Roman guards, and a crowd of biblical notables, including, among others, Moses, David, Elijah, Noah, Isaiah, Esther, and Daniel. Copies of the painting in various sizes can be purchased from Tapestry Productions through their website at www.TapestryProductions.com. Detailed information about the mural and its artist can be found at www.ResurrectionMural.com. A fascinating video about the painting can be found at http://www.cbn.com/media/player/index.aspx?s=/vod/mw131v2_ws.

bought spices to anoint the body of Jesus *after* the Sabbath was over. But in Luke 23:56 it says they bought the spices *before* the Sabbath and then rested on the Sabbath before proceeding to the tomb on Sunday morning.

There seems to be only one explanation of the apparent contradiction in these verses. After resting on the high day Sabbath on Thursday, the ladies bought the spices on Friday and then rested again on the regular weekly Sabbath on Saturday before proceeding to the tomb on Sunday morning.

This explains how they could have bought the spices both before and after the Sabbath. They bought them after the high Sabbath on Thursday but before the regular Sabbath on Saturday.

An Amazing Corroboration

A fascinating fact that also indicates that the resurrection may well have occurred in 31 AD is to be found in calculations done

31 AD — the year in which the Passover week had two Sabbaths.

A Final Problem

Another point of controversy about the resurrection week concerns the nature of the Lord's last supper with His disciples. The church has traditionally taught that this was the Passover meal. But the scriptures clearly indicate that the meal was eaten the evening before Passover.

Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation for the Passover. In fact, He died at three o'clock in the afternoon at the precise moment that the Passover lambs were being slaughtered for the Passover meal that evening (Matthew 27:45-46).

Jesus and His disciples had eaten their last meal together the evening before Passover. Yet, Jesus referred to His last meal with His disciples as "keeping the Passover" (Matt. 26:18). So, it must have been a Passover meal that was celebrated one



(i-Stockphoto.com)

evening early.

Professor Harold Hoehner of Dallas Theological Seminary has proposed a solution to this problem.² He says there is evidence that the Galilean Jews reckoned time differently from the Judean Jews. Whereas the Judean Jews counted a day from sunset to sunset, the Galilean Jews, according to Hoehner, counted a day from sunrise to sunrise. If this is true, then Jesus and His disciples, being Galileans, would have celebrated Passover one evening earlier than their Jewish brethren in the Jerusalem area.

On the other hand, since Jesus knew He was to be sacrificed as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world, He may simply have decided to celebrate Passover one day early so that His death on the cross could coincide precisely with the sacrifice of the Passover lambs the next day.

A Summary of the Order of Events

- 1) Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover meal on a Tuesday evening (April 24th), one day early, in the Upper Room on Mount Zion.
- 2) After the Passover meal, Jesus and His disciples departed the Upper Room and walked to the Garden of Gethsemane in the Kidron Valley between the Old City and the Mount of Olives.
- 3) Jesus was betrayed and arrested early Tuesday evening. His various trials lasted throughout Tuesday night and early Wednesday morning.
- 4) Jesus was crucified at about 9:00 am on Wednesday morning (April 25th). At noon, darkness filled the land. At about 3:00 pm Jesus died.
- 5) Jesus was buried on Wednesday about sunset.
- 6) The two Marys waited until after the high Sabbath on Thursday (April 26th) to purchase the spices for the anointing of Jesus' body. They bought the spices on Friday (April 27th) and then rested again during the regular Sabbath on Saturday (April 28th) before returning to the tomb on Sunday morning (April 29th).
- 7) The resurrection of Jesus occurred on Saturday evening (Sunday by Judean reckoning of time). The resurrection was discovered on Sunday morning when the women returned to the tomb.

What Difference Does It Make?

Lest you be tempted to write all this off as much ado about nothing, let me explain why I think it is important. Prophecy and its fulfillment validate Jesus as who He said He was — namely, God in the flesh. Prophecy and its fulfillment also validate the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Prophecy must be fulfilled precisely, not approximately.

The precise fulfillment of prophecy regarding the First Coming of Jesus is our assurance that all the prophecies regarding His Second Coming will also be fulfilled completely to the last detail. God will not forget or overlook anything. He is true to His Word. God keeps His promises. Hallelujah! ❖

Notes:

- 1) William Whiston, *The Complete Works of Josephus*, with commentary by Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications 1999). Whiston's calculations of the last Jubilee year in Israel before 70 AD can be found in Appendix Dissertation #5: "Upon the Chronology of Josephus" (page 1067). Whiston graduated from Cambridge in 1690 and succeeded Sir Isaac Newton as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics in 1703. He was a brilliant mathematician, physicist, theologian, and linguist. He lived from 1667 to 1752.
- 2) Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 1978).

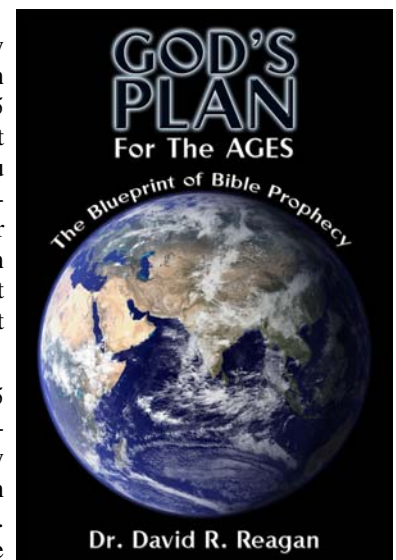
God's End Time Plan

On the next page you will find a very disturbing article about the perversion of Bible prophecy. You will see how the spiritualization of Scripture can lead to gross distortions of the truth.

For a balanced presentation of what is going to happen in these end times, based solely on a plain sense, literal interpretation of Scripture, you might consider the book below which prophecy teacher Jack Van Impe recently declared to be "unlike anything I have ever studied, even after having read more than 11,000 books!"

The book covers every aspect of Bible prophecy in 42 chapters running 415 pages in length. It is not the type of book that you have to read from beginning to end. Every chapter stands on its own. You can skip about, reading about the topics you find most interesting.

The book costs \$15 and can be ordered by calling 800-705-8316 Monday through Friday between 8am and 5pm Central time. You can also order the book through our website at www.lamblion.com. ❖



The Madness of Date-Setting

Dr. David R. Reagan

Harold Camping (age 88) is at it again! Back in 1992 he published a book titled *1994?* in which he set the date for the Lord's return for September 6, 1994.¹ Now, in his latest book, *Time Has An End*, he has set a new "absolute" date of May 21, 2011.²

Unfortunately, Camping has a lot of influence within Christendom because he owns the Family Radio Network which broadcasts his messages over 150 radio stations within the United States. His message is also being broadcast via satellites to most of the nations of the world.

Unfortunately, also, his message has been featured widely in the secular press, as is always the case with date-setters. That's because the press loves to play them up to the hilt in preparation for making fun of them when their date proves false. The result, of course, is that Bible prophecy is subjected to ridicule.

Despite the fact that he was proved to be a false prophet in 1994, Camping has convinced many people of the validity of his new date. His followers have erected billboards all over the nation. Some have emblazoned their cars with the message. Others are handing out T-shirts and bumper stickers. A website has been created at www.WeCanKnow.com. And mission groups are carrying the message to the four corners of the earth.



One of Camping's enthusiastic followers is shown above with her car plastered with his message. (Source: <http://logiwaysnew.cre.lt/tmp/may-21-2011.html>)

An Historical Precedent

It is all reminiscent of a Vermont farmer by the name of William Miller who developed a theory in the 1820's, based on Daniel 8:14, that Jesus would return to the earth on March 21, 1844.³

In the King James Version that passage reads: "And he [a saint or holy one] said unto me, 'Unto 2,300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.'" This is a prophecy about the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes and its ultimate cleansing. But Miller applied it to the end times and converted the days into years. Assuming the prophecy was given in 457 BC, he calculated that Jesus would return 2,300 years later, on March 21, 1844. Incredibly, he interpreted the "cleansing of the sanctuary" to refer to the purging of the earth by fire at the Second Coming of Jesus!



One of a variety of Harold Camping billboards. This one was erected in Akron, Ohio. (Source: <http://madmikesamerica.com>)

When Miller's date came and passed without any sign of the Lord's return, he proceeded to set a new date for October 22, 1844. When nothing happened on this second date, most of Miller's followers became totally disillusioned. The whole experience was dubbed "The Great Disappointment." Miller died in disgrace four years later in 1849.

But that did not prove to be the end of the matter. One small group of Miller's followers in New England decided that he had not been wrong after all. Led by a young so-called prophetess named Ellen G. White, they began to teach that on October 22, 1844, Jesus had entered the Holy of Holies in Heaven to begin an "investigative judgment" of the works of every person who has ever lived in order to determine their fitness for Heaven.⁴ They further taught that the reason Jesus did not return to the earth on the October date was because of the Church's failure to observe the Jewish Sabbath. And thus was founded the modern-day cult known as The Seventh Day Adventists.⁵

Harold Camping's date-setting parallels that of the Millerite Movement in several ways. First, like Miller, his cornerstone scripture is Daniel 8:14, but he applies the 2,300 days differently. In his first book, *1994?*, Camping argued that the Tribulation began on May 21, 1988 and that Jesus would return 2,300 days later, after He had cleansed the Church, resulting in a date of September 6, 1994.

And just as was the case with the Millerite Movement, when Jesus did not arrive, Camping declared that the day he had selected was spiritually very significant. The only problem was that he had misinterpreted its meaning. Instead of it being the day of the Lord's return, it was the day that the end-time pouring out of God's Spirit began, ushering in a period when there would be a great harvest of souls, after which the Lord would return.

Having justified his first error in date-setting, Camping then proceeded to set his second date for May 21, 2011. Before we consider how he arrived at his new date, let's take a look at Camping's method of biblical interpretation.

Camping's Interpretive Errors

The way Harold Camping approaches biblical interpretation could be summarized as reckless. First, as demonstrated above, he often takes prophecies that apply to a specific historical period and relates them instead to the end times. The context of Daniel 8:14 makes it clear that the prophecy of 2,300 days applies to the time when a tyrant by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes dese-

crated the Temple in Jerusalem. It was 2,300 days later, after the Maccabean Revolt, that the Temple was cleansed and rededicated. The prophecy has nothing to do with the end times or with a cleansing of the Church.

Camping's greatest error of interpretation is rooted in his insistence that the Bible is a parable from beginning to end and thus must be interpreted allegorically.⁶ He insists that the real meaning of any passage is to be found in its hidden spiritual meaning that can only be decoded by true believers. Such an approach to Scripture makes it possible for Camping to interpret passages in any way he pleases, and that is exactly what he does.

As an example, he argues that the Two Witnesses in Revelation 11 represent the Church, and that when the time for the Church's witness comes to an end, God will kill (or destroy) the Church. The fact of the matter is that there is nothing in Revelation 11 that even hints that the Two Witnesses are anything other than two persons who will be anointed by God to call the world to repentance during the first half of the Tribulation.

Another trick Camping constantly resorts to is re-translating Scriptures in unorthodox ways to give them the meaning he desires. An example of this can be found in his effort to prove that God is revealing new truths today. He quotes Hebrews 8:8 which declares that God "will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." This, of course, is speaking of the New Testament, but Camping says, no, it is talking about providing new revelations in the end times and should therefore be translated to say that "God will *finish* a new covenant" rather than make one!⁷

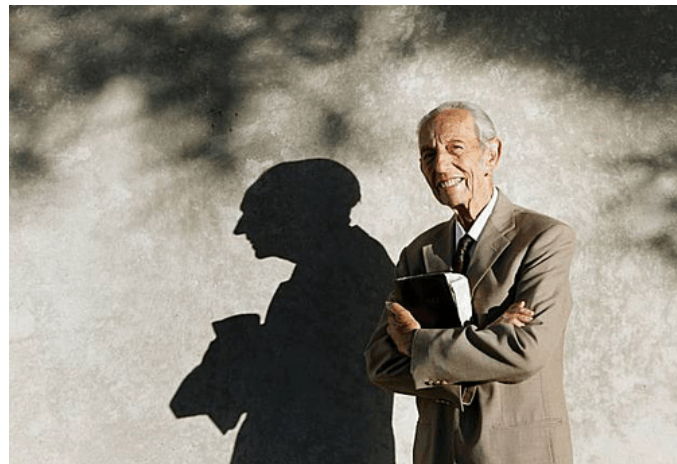
Often times he will simply quote only part of a verse, giving it a meaning it never was intended to have. An example of this will be provided later.

Since Camping was trained as an engineer, he loves numbers, and he plays with them constantly, giving them any meaning that he happens to need to support his off-the-wall interpretations. Thus, when he needs a number to be literal (as with the 2,300 days in Daniel 8:14), he interprets it literally. But if he needs it to be symbolic, then so be it, regardless of the context. Accordingly, he interprets the one thousand years of the Millennium to be 1,955 years! That's because he equates the Millennium with the Church Age.

Camping's End-Time Scenario

The result is an end-time scenario that is right out of *Alice in Wonderland* because it is based on twisted scriptures, allegorical imaginings, and number tricks. Below is a summary of it.⁸ Let me warn you that before you read it, you'd better sit down and take a deep breath!

- 1) The Church Age ended on May 21, 1988 and the Tribulation began that day.
- 2) Between May 21, 1988 and September 6, 1994, the first six years of the Tribulation, almost no one was saved.
- 3) On September 6, 1994, God began to pour out His Spirit. This will result in a great end time harvest of souls during the last years of the Tribulation.
- 4) Since the Tribulation will last 8,400 days or 23 years, dating from May 21, 1988, the Rapture will occur on May 21, 2011.



Harold Camping. (Source: <http://articles.sfgate.com>)

- 5) Those left behind will be judged by Jesus for a period of five months, until October 21, 2011, at which time the world will come to an end.

Problems with Camping's End Time Scenario

Okay, I gave you fair warning. Now, this scenario raises a lot of questions. One of the most important is, "How did he arrive at the date of May 21, 1988 as the end of the Church Age?" The answer is enthralling:

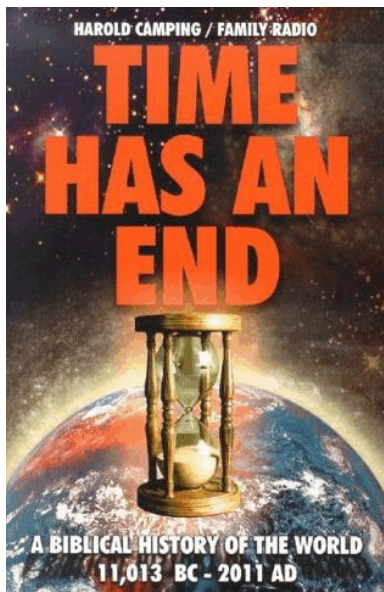
- 1) He begins his explanation by asserting that the first Jubilee Year after the re-establishment of Israel in 1948 was 1994.
- 2) Then he says that because the last part of the Tribulation is identified with a great multitude to be saved (Revelation 7), the last part of the Tribulation must have begun in 1994, since it was the first Jubilee Year since the re-establishment of Israel in 1948.
- 3) He then explains that because the first part of the Tribulation must be identified with the 2,300 days of Daniel, the Tribulation must have begun 2,300 days earlier, which would place it in 1988.
- 4) And since the Church was established on the Day of Pentecost, the end of the Church Age must have occurred on the day before Pentecost, which in 1988 was May 21.

Thus, the Church Age ended and the Tribulation began on May 21, 1988. Absolutely mind-boggling! All this "explanation" succeeds in doing is raising a whole host of other questions:

- 1) Who says the first Jubilee Year in Israel after the re-establishment of the state was 1994? The Jews make no such claim. According to Jewish traditions, the very first Jubilee Year was celebrated 50 years after the Jewish people entered the land of Canaan.⁹ Accordingly, it would seem logical to assume that a resumption of the Jubilee Years in modern times would start with the year 1998, 50 years after Israel was re-established in 1948. But the fact is that the Jubilee Year today is neither calculated nor celebrated because the Jews believe there can be no celebration of the Jubilee until a majority of all Jews, representing all tribes, are back in the land. So, Camping's very first step in his calculations is totally invalid.
- 2) Who says that the last part of the Tribulation is to be identified with the great host of saved people who are pictured in

Revelation 7 as Tribulation martyrs? The chronology of Revelation puts these people in the first half of the Tribulation, not the latter part.

- 3) Where does he get the idea that the last part of the Tribulation is going to be a great time of world wide evangelism and soul-saving? The book of Revelation pictures the last half of the Tribulation as a time of absolute chaos on earth.
- 4) Who says the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14 must be identified with the first part of the Tribulation? This is not even an end time prophecy!
- 5) Who says the Church Age must end on the day before Pentecost? The Church Age will end when the Church is raptured out of this world, and that is an event that can occur at any time.



Another question Camping’s end time scenario raises is, “How did he come up with the date of May 21, 2011 for the Rapture?”

The answer is simple. He just asserts that since the Tribulation lasts 23 years, the Rapture will occur on May 21, 2011, because that is 23 years after the Tribulation began on May 21, 1988. I was never able to figure out how he arrived at 23 years for the length of the Tribulation when both Daniel and Revelation make it clear that the Tribulation will last 7 years. I’m sure his answer is there somewhere, based on allegorical interpretation, but I couldn’t find it.

All of which reveals another trick this master magician uses. His writings are so obtuse as to be indecipherable, a technique that convinces many people that he must be a profound thinker who has received revelations from God that are beyond the comprehension of the average person.

Another question which he does answer is, “Where does he get the idea of a five month period of judgment following the Rapture?” You’re not going to believe this, but he points first to Revelation 9:5 where it states that one of the Tribulation judgments of God will be locusts who sting like scorpions, a judgment that will last for five months. The passage is, of course, talking about one of the seven Trumpet judgments that will take place on the earth during the first half of the Tribulation.

The second passage he points to is just downright surreal. He cites John 21:11 where it says the disciples caught 153 fish! He interprets this allegorically to mean that there will be 153 days of judgment after the Rapture (or five months). Do you see how allegorical interpretation results in the interpreter becoming God? It’s because he can make the scriptures say and mean whatever he pleases.

To compound the idiocy, Camping then claims that he can prove that the number 153 has great theological significance. After all, he points out, $3 \times 3 \times 17 = 153$. So, what’s the significance of that equation? He asserts, without proof, that the number 17 stands for Heaven, and the number 3 represents God’s purpose. So, the equation means, “God’s purpose (3) is to take people to Heaven (17).” And the number 3 is doubled to signify that God really means what He says! He then fails to explain how this has

anything to do with 153 days of judging the lost.

Of course, another question I would like to ask Camping is, “How can we be in the Tribulation when the book of Revelation teaches that one-half of humanity will die during the first 3½ years when the Antichrist is conducting wars that will enable him to conquer all the earth?” Where are those wars? Where is such a death count? Where is the Antichrist?

Playing With Numbers

As I pointed out earlier, Camping is a former engineer, and as such, he loves to play with numbers. They are an obsession with him.

The best example is a mathematical formula he discovered that absolutely convinced him that he is correct in dating the end of the Church Age to May 21, 1988. He treats this formula in his writings as if it has eclipsed the world’s previously most important equation — namely, $E=MC^2$. Once again,

you had better sit down. Here’s how it goes:

- 1) From the time of the crucifixion on April 11, 33 AD (a date that is not agreed upon by scholars) to May 21, 2011 is a total of 722,500 days.
- 2) The number 722,500 is made up of two sets of an identical series of numbers: $5 \times 10 \times 17 \times 5 \times 10 \times 17 = 722,500$.
- 3) Now, since the number 5 stands for atonement (Says who?) and 10 stands for perfection (Since when?) and 17 stands for Heaven (Give me a break!), this formula means, “Atonement has been completed for Heaven,” and it is repeated twice for emphasis.

And if that silliness is not enough, Camping points to another calculation of his that he says validates his date for the Rapture. He states that the Noahic Flood occurred in 4990 BC (most Evangelical scholars place it from 2500 to 2300 BC!). He then points out that the time span from 4990 BC to 2011 is exactly 7,000 years.

Even if this were true, what would it prove? Well, Camping says that when Noah preached that Mankind had 7 days to escape the destruction (Genesis 7:4), he was really saying that Mankind had 7,000 years of existence left, since to God a thousand years is as a day. Once again, we find allegorical interpretation running amok!

The Ultimate Challenge

All date-setters have to deal with Matthew 24:36 where Jesus, speaking of His return, said, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.”

Camping dismisses this statement as being no longer true. He says it all changed in September of 1994 when the Holy Spirit began to be poured out and new revelations concerning the end times began to be given to true believers. He argues this is in fulfillment of a promise given in Ecclesiastes 8:5 where it states that “a wise heart knows the proper time and procedure.”

Once again, Camping just fishes around for some words to substantiate an unrelated point. Ecclesiastes 8:5 is specifically

talking about being obedient to political leaders. It says that a wise heart knows the proper time and procedure to obey a royal command. The fact that it is so specific is the reason that Camping only quotes the last half of the verse.

Camping also quotes Daniel 12:4 & 9. These verses state that certain end time prophecies will not be understood until the time comes for them to be fulfilled. This is certainly true with regard to prophecies that depend upon historical developments (like the re-establishment of Israel). The verses also relate to prophecies that rely on modern technology (like the whole world looking upon the dead bodies of the two witnesses in Jerusalem). But these verses certainly do not apply to Jesus' statement in Matthew 24:36 where He stated without reservation that no one can know the date of His return.

Camping also points to 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5 which says that the Lord will return "like a thief in the night," but not as such for "brethren" who are "sons of light and sons of day." Camping argues that these verses mean that true believers can know the date of the Lord's return. But that is not the meaning of this passage. Instead, it simply means that believers can know the season of the Lord's return (and not the date) because we have been given signs to watch for.

The Emergence of a New Cult



(Source: www.teachinstitute.org)

One final observation about Harold Camping — he is not only just a false prophet, he is also a cult leader. This has not always been true of him, but it has become increasingly apparent over the past 20 years.¹⁰ It was confirmed in 2002 with the publication of his book entitled, *The End of the Church Age . . . And After*.¹¹

In that book he proclaimed once again that God had washed His hands of the Church on May 21, 1988 when the Church Age came to an end. But this time he went even further. He declared that all churches in existence today are apostate and therefore are incapable of saving anyone. This conclusion prompted him to issue a call for all Bible-believing Christians to leave their churches. The clear implication was for them to affiliate with his group, since they are the only truly enlightened ones. The book brims with heretical statements from beginning to end, the most blasphemous being his assertion that "the Angel Michael is the Lord Jesus Christ."¹²

Camping's teaching about the Church is as wrong as it can be. The Church is inseparable from Jesus, for the Bible teaches that the Church is the Body of Christ, with Christ as its head (Ephesians 1:22, 4:15 and 5:23. See also: Colossians 1:18 and 2:19). Further, Jesus promised that the gates of Hades would never be able to prevail against the Church (Matthew 16:18).

Further evidence of his drift toward the cults is to be found in recent reports that he is now teaching that there is no such thing as a literal Hell.¹³ He argues it was doctrine devised by man to intimidate people. According to Camping, when an unbeliever dies, he will be judged by God and then be annihilated.

What has happened to Harold Camping is what always happens when a person starts playing with the Word of God, arguing that it does not mean what it says, but, rather, it means what that person wants it to mean.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is only one thing I know for certain about the date of May 21, 2011, and that is that Jesus will not return on that day. He may appear in the Rapture the day before or the day after, but it will not be on May 21. The Rapture is an event that can occur any moment. We cannot know the date, but we can know the season, for we have been given signs to watch for, and those signs are all around us today.

We are definitely in the season, and the crucial question is, "Are you ready?" You can answer that question positively and with certainty only if you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior. If you have done that, then you can cry out, "Maranatha! Come quickly, Lord Jesus!" ❖

Notes:

- 1) Harold Camping, *1994?* (New York, NY: Vantage Press, 1992).
- 2) Harold Camping, *Time Has An End* (New York, NY: Vantage Press, 2003).
- 3) For more information about William Miller see "William Miller: The Sincerely Deceived Prophet" by Dr. David R. Reagan, *Lamplighter* magazine, November-December 2003, pages 10-12.
- 4) Ibid.
- 5) For a detailed discussion of the founding of the Seventh Day Adventists, see "The Seventh Day Adventists: Christian or Cultic?" by Dr. David R. Reagan, *Lamplighter* magazine, July-August, 2006, pages 3-11.
- 6) GotQuestions.org, "Is Harold Camping and Family Radio a cult?" www.gotquestions.org/Harold-Camping-family-radio.html.
- 7) Harold Camping, *We Are Almost There!* (Oakland, CA: Family Stations, Inc., 2008), page 3.
- 8) Ibid., pages 47-48.
- 9) Rabbi Shraga Simmons, "What is the Jubilee Year in Judaism?" <http://judaism.about.com/od/prayersworshiprituals/f/jubilee.htm>.
- 10) Robert Gianserra, "The Madness of Harold Camping," www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/2305427/posts.
- 11) Harold Camping, *The End of the Church Age . . . And After* (Oakland, CA: Family Stations, Inc., 2002).
- 12) Ibid, page 56.
- 13) Gianserra, "The Madness of Harold Camping."

Another Sad Case of Apostasy

Dr. David R. Reagan

Sometime during the summer of 1983, when Lamb & Lion Ministries was only three years old, a strange man stopped by our offices and asked to speak to me. He introduced himself as Vendyl Jones, and then he smiled and said, "I'm the original Indiana Jones." He was referring, of course, to the main character in the very popular movie, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, which was released in 1981.

When I asked him what he meant by his remark, he explained that he had been searching for the Ark of the Covenant for several years and that the main character in the *Raiders* movie had been modeled after him. I didn't know whether he was kidding or not, but one thing became very clear, very fast: he was obsessed with finding the Ark of the Covenant.

After listening to him ramble on and on about the Ark and how essential it was to the building of the Third Temple, I finally found an opportunity to say a few words. I told him I did not think the discovery of the Ark was essential at all to the building of the Temple. When he asked why, I explained that the Ark was never in the Second Temple (the temple in the time of Jesus), and that it is not mentioned in the book of Ezekiel as being in the future Millennial Temple. Furthermore, I pointed out that Jeremiah prophesied that during the Millennium, "the ark shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they miss it, nor shall it be made again" (Jeremiah 3:16).

At that point, Mr. Jones lost interest in talking with me. He didn't try to argue. He just got up and left, and he left me wondering who he was and how he had found out about me. After all, my ministry was only three years old and was known to very few people.

In the following years, I kept running across Vendyl Jones in the news, and none of it was good. I discovered that he was an apostate Christian who had denounced the deity of Jesus and had become a leader in the Noahide Movement, a group that claims that Gentiles can be saved by following the laws of Noah as revealed in Genesis 9:1-17.

The Path to Apostasy

Vendyl Jones was born in 1930 in Sudan, Texas (in West Texas between Amarillo and Lubbock). He was raised in a Baptist home and accepted Jesus as his Savior at the age of 16. He decided to enter the ministry, and in order to pursue that goal, he attended classes at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, before transferring to the now-defunct Bible Baptist Seminary in Dallas where he earned two divinity degrees.

In 1955 at age 25 he became pastor of Dugan Chapel Baptist Church in Elizabethton, Tennessee. He claims that while studying the Bible there, he came across Matthew 27:25 where it is recorded that the Jewish people cried out to Pilate that the blood of Jesus "be on us and our children." He said there was a marginal note in his Bible that stated this passage was not in the oldest manuscripts. That deeply disturbed him. The more he



Vendyl Jones near Qumran at the Dead Sea in Israel. (Source: <http://badarchaeology.wordpress.com>.)

thought about it, the more he became convinced that there was an anti-Semitic conspiracy among the early Church fathers to manipulate the Scriptures to put the blame for the death of Jesus on the Jewish people.

Jones resigned his pastorate in 1956 and moved to Greenville, South Carolina, where he started studying with a Jewish Rabbi. And thus began his journey into apostasy. Over the ensuing years, he rejected the virgin birth of Jesus, denied the deity of Jesus, declared all His miracles to be a sham, and scoffed at Jesus' resurrection.

He also embraced a form of Dual Covenant Theology, arguing that the Jews can be saved by following the Mosaic Covenant and that Gentiles can be saved by following the Laws of Noah.

Many times he was asked what Bible he was using when he discovered the notation that Matthew 27:25 was not in any of the oldest manuscripts, because that simply is not true. He would never reveal which version it was (because it doesn't exist!).

Shifting His Focus to Israel

In 1967 he moved his family to Israel in order to study at Hebrew University. Over the next four decades, he split his time between doing archaeological digs in Israel and touring the U.S. to raise money for the digs. He made two discoveries that captured headlines. One was a jug of oil he found near Qumran that he claimed was the anointing oil used at the Jerusalem Temple. The second was some red dirt that he claimed contained the 11 spices used in the Temple incense. Neither of these finds were ever endorsed by professional archaeologists.

Vendyl Jones died on December 27, 2010, at the age of 80 after suffering several months from throat cancer. Sadly, he left behind a legacy of having "trampled under foot the Son of God" and having "insulted the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29).

Matthew 27:25 is not an anti-Semitic blood libel. It is simply an historical recording of what Jews shouted at the trial of Jesus. Its implications were more than offset by the incredible words that Jesus spoke from the Cross: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). ✚

1) Television and Video

Broadcast 52 weeks of *Christ in Prophecy* TV programs over four national networks and two regional networks with access to over 80 million homes inside the United States.

Broadcast via Daystar satellites to almost every nation in the world.

Produced 24 new *Christ in Prophecy* TV programs and revised 4 others.

Broadcast our 433rd television program at the end of December.

Produced three new video albums.

Reproduced and distributed over 35,000 DVD video programs.

Constructed an entirely new television set and purchased high definition video recorders.

Added a new staff member to serve as a video editor.

2) Internet and Website

Sent out 29 e-newsletters to 16,500 subscribers, sharing biblical messages and the electronic *Lamplighter* magazine.

Experienced 135,000 to 185,000 unique visitors to our website each month.

Experienced growth of "The Christ in Prophecy" Facebook group to over 3,750 members.

Posted 263 Bible prophecy related articles on "The Christ in Prophecy Journal" blog.

Answered hundreds of spiritual questions submitted by email and discussion forums.

Streamed over 130 "Christ in Prophecy" TV shows.

Launched our Twitter outreach.

Podcast over 60,000 mp3s per month.

3) Preaching and Teaching

Completed a total of 25 speaking engagements:

11 weekend conferences at churches.

12 Bible prophecy conferences.

2 Bible study groups.

Participated in 18 radio interviews.

4) Publications

Published a Holy Land calendar for 2011.

Produced 6 issues of the Ministry's magazine, *The Lamplighter*.

Began publishing an abbreviated version of our magazine in India.

Published one new edition of "Bible Prophecy Insights."

Published a new book, *Eternity: Heaven or Hell?*

Published reprints of *God's Plan for the Ages* and *The Revelation*

Study Guide (for our Revelation audio album).

Published a Spanish version of our children's book, *Jesus is Coming Again!*.

Published *America the Beautiful?* in Urdu and *Wrath & Glory* in Nepali and Chinese.

5) Missions

Shipped Bible study materials and Bibles to individuals and missions in many different foreign countries.

Provided regular monthly financial support to 19 missions — 7 domestic and 12 foreign.

Donated a total of more than \$272,000 in cash and services to missions.

6) Israel

Conducted one Holy Land pilgrimage with 50 pilgrims.

Provided financial assistance to several ministries in Israel.

7) Conferences

Conducted our annual Bible conference with 700 attendees.

Hosted a conference on America's Christian Heritage, featuring Peter Marshall.

Produced a Bible prophecy conference for a church in Tyler, Texas.

Participated in 10 Bible prophecy conferences sponsored by other ministries.

8) Finances

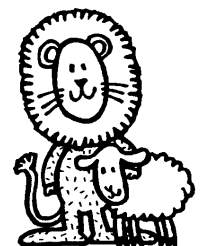
Received 20,581 gifts from 3,940 donors.

Experienced growth in Prophecy Partners to a total of 2,370.

Received re-certification as a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

Received a four star rating (the highest possible) from Charity Navigator.

Ended the calendar year with all bills paid in full for the 31st year in a row.



New Programs

As we reported last month, we began the new year by editing a series of four programs about biblical archaeology that we videotaped late last year with Dr. James Fleming. We are now editing the programs together to produce a new video album (see the back cover of this magazine).

In late January we began shooting new programs. Our first shoot was with Eric Barger, one of Christendom’s leading apologists. One of the most important topics we discussed with him was the apostate Emergent Church Movement.



Eric Barger is shown above with Dave and Nathan Jones.

In February we recorded programs with prophecy teacher August Rosado, with a Messianic Jew named Stu Schlackman, and with Caryl Matrisciana, a cult and occult expert. One of Matrisciana’s interviews was a hard hitting one about the nonsense of “Christian Yoga.” We also interviewed cult expert James Walker concerning Harold Camping’s date setting. That program will be aired in May the week before the date that Camping has set for the Lord’s return.

In March we plan to shoot a series of programs with prophecy teacher Gary Fisher concerning some of the questions people most frequently ask about Bible prophecy. We will also be interviewing two Bible teachers from Louisville, Kentucky — Jean Eason and Orpah Hicks — who have written a great book on the fundamentals of the Christian faith, including Bible prophecy.

Many other new video shoots are planned for the Spring, including one at the new Museum of Biblical Arts in Dallas, Texas (www.biblicalarts.org). This is the facility that houses the incredible mural of the Resurrection by Ron DiCianni which you will find on page 9 of this magazine. In late May we plan to take a video crew to La Grange, Georgia, to film Dr. James Fleming teaching at his Biblical Resources Center (www.biblicalresources.net).

Keep our television ministry in your prayers. We currently have access to over 80 million homes in the United States, and through the satellite systems of Daystar and The Church Channel, we have access to every nation in the world. We praise God for entrusting us with the blessing of such a great outreach. ❖

“Christ in Prophecy” Broadcast Schedule

National Networks

Daystar Network				
DirecTV Channel 369		DISH Channel 263		
On cable networks throughout the nation.				
Zone	Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
Day Time	Wed. 4:00pm	Wed. 5:00pm	Wed. 6:00pm	Wed. 7:00pm

Inspiration Network				
Available on cable networks				
DirecTV Channel 364		DISH Channel 259		
Zone	Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
Day Time	Mon. 8:30p	Mon. 9:30pm	Mon. 10:30pm	Mon. 11:30pm

The Church Channel				
DirecTV Channel 371				
Zone	Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
Day Time	Sat. 6:30pm	Sat. 7:30pm	Sat. 8:30pm	Sat. 9:30pm

National Religious Broadcasters Network				
DirecTV Channel 378				
Zone	Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
Day Time	Sun. 2:00pm	Sun. 3:00pm	Sun. 4:00pm	Sun. 5:00pm

Regional Networks



“Christ in Prophecy” is broadcast throughout southern Louisiana on the **Family Vision Network** at various times. See: www.kajn.com/familyvision.



New Mexico Family Stations is a network consisting of two stations in Albuquerque: KAZQ, Channel 32 and KTVS, Channel 36. Our program is broadcast on Thursday at 11:00pm and on Saturday at 3:00pm.

The Internet

You can access our weekly television program through our website at www.lamblion.com. Go to the home page, scroll down to the bottom, and click on “Current TV Show.” You can also watch our TV programs on the Tangle website at www.tangle.com/lamblion. ❖

June Conference

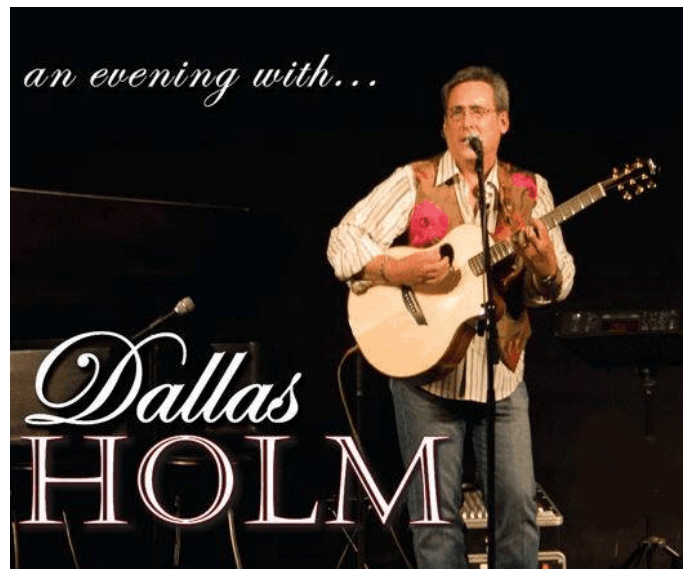
Register Now!

We are currently taking reservations for our June Bible conference. We can accommodate 700, and we are expecting to have a full house. So, if you are interested in attending, you need to call and register now.

The conference is scheduled to begin Friday evening, June 24th, and will conclude Saturday afternoon, June 25th. The cost is free of charge. There will be a banquet Saturday evening at which Dr. Reagan will speak. It will cost \$35 per person. You can register for the conference and/or the banquet by calling 972-736-3567.

The theme of this year's conference is "Christianity Under Attack." It will feature the following presentations:

- "The Challenge of Islam" by Kerby Anderson
- "The Challenge of Humanism and Atheism," by Ron Rhodes
- "The Challenge of Evolution," by John Morris
- "The Challenge of Apostasy," by James Walker
- "The Challenge of Government," by Frank Wright
- "The Promise of Victory" by Dave Reagan



The conference will begin on Friday evening with a concert by the renowned Christian musician, Dallas Holm. Music during the rest of the conference will be supplied by Jack Hollingsworth, the ministry's featured singer on its television program.

The conference will be held at the Marriott Courtyard Hotel in Allen, Texas, a suburb of Dallas. Hope to see you there! ❖

Missions Report

Philippine Evangelist Visits

At the annual retreat of our Board of Trustees last December we were blessed by the presence of a Filipino Evangelist whom we have supported for many years. His name is Remegio Blanco.



Pastor Remegio Blanco is shown above on the right, together with Dr. Reagan and Jack & Sally Hollingsworth.

Pastor Blanco is a man with an overwhelming zeal for lost souls. In addition to pastoring a church, he holds evangelistic crusades and Bible prophecy conferences throughout an area located north of Manila. Together with his son, Joseph, he also organizes youth crusades.

In addition to spending three days with our trustees, he

accompanied Dr. Reagan to the annual Pre-Trib Study Conference that is held in Dallas each year. Before departing the States, we were able to give him a check for \$5,000 for his ministry, thanks to the generosity of our supporters.

A Report on Special Appeals

In October and November of last year, we made an appeal for funds for Hands of Luke Ministries in Juarez, Mexico. This is a great ministry that provides care for orphans, single moms, and homeless people. The ministry's founder and director, Dr. Marco Samaniego, also supplies free medical care to the poor, together with several other medical doctors who assist him. And that's not all! The ministry also feeds breakfast to about 300 children each morning, most of whom live on or around the Juarez garbage dump. Through your generous support, we were able to supply this ministry with over \$15,000 to help with their annual feedings at Thanksgiving and Christmas. They usually serve 20,000 at Thanksgiving, and at Christmas they feed 5,000 children and give each of them a gift — all of which is done in the name of Jesus. The ministry's outreach has been hampered in recent years by the extreme violence in Juarez, but they continue their outreach, often at the risk of their lives.

Another appeal we made recently was for funds for Bibles for Nigerian Christians. We experienced an overwhelming response. We received sufficient funds to provide all the Bibles needed — over 450 of them — and we had money left over to supply emergency relief aid to a group of Nigerian Christians who were recently attacked by Muslims. Their church and village were burned to the ground, and many of the Christians suffered severe injuries.

It is a joy and a blessing for us to be used by God as a channel of blessings to others. ❖

Ministry News

Schedule —

Due to his knee operation in early January, Dr. Reagan cleared his calendar of all speaking engagements through the end of March. He decided to focus instead on the production of new television programs. In **March** Nathan Jones is scheduled to speak at Oakley Christian Church in Oakley, Kansas (19-20). In **April** Dr. Reagan will speak at a prophecy conference to be held in La Crete, Alberta, Canada at the Living Hope Evangelical Church (9-10). Later that month he will participate in the Mid-America Prophecy Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma, sponsored by Phillip Goodman Ministries (28-30). In **May** Dr. Reagan is scheduled to hold a weekend conference at Maranatha Fellowship Church in St. Albans, West Virginia (14-15). In **June** he will conduct a conference at Hill-N-Dale Christian Church in Lexington, Kentucky (4-5). He will be assisted at this conference by Larry McCoy, the musician who has put the entire book of Revelation to music.

Prophecy Partners —

The financial and prayer base of our ministry is supplied by our Prophecy Partners. We currently have slightly more than 2,300 of these wonderful people who have committed themselves to be partners in our effort to proclaim the soon return of Jesus to as many people as possible, as quickly as possible. To become a Partner, you must agree to pray for us regularly and to provide a monthly donation of \$20 or more. Once you have made that commitment, you will start receiving a monthly letter from Dr. Reagan in which he will tell you about developments in the ministry and provide you with specific prayer requests. He will also send you a monthly gift, which is usually a DVD program about some aspect of Bible prophecy. Our goal this year is to surpass the 2,500 mark in our number of Prophecy Partners, so that we can increase our outreach via television. To sign up, give us a call at 800-705-8316. Thanks!



Two of our Prophecy Partners, Tommy and Linda Conyers from Arkansas, are shown above with our Web Minister, Nathan Jones.



(i-Stockphoto.com)

Holy Land Tour —

Our next pilgrimage to the Holy Land is scheduled for October 29 through November 9. The group will spend two nights in Tel Aviv, two in Tiberias (on the Sea of Galilee), and five in Jerusalem. Also, the group will spend a night in Frankfurt, Germany on the way back home to the States. Dr. Reagan will personally lead the group, which will be limited to a total of 52. To secure a detailed brochure, call 972-736-3567. Or, you can find the details about the trip on the Internet at www.discoveryworldwideministries.com/israel/reagan-10-29-2011.php. Don't miss this opportunity to see the land of the Bible and to

walk in the footsteps of Jesus. As one person has put it: "A tour of the Holy Land converts the Bible from black and white into living color!"



Dr. Reagan at the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem.

Finances —

Our finances are an open book. We will be glad to supply you with information about any aspect of our finances. We believe that any ministry that relies on donations should be willing to share its income and expense information with its donors and the general public. On our website we post a summary of our finances, and we also post copies of our annual audit and the annual 990 Report we make to the federal government. We also believe in operating debt free, and we rejoice that our land, buildings and equipment are all paid for.

Website —

Have you visited our website recently? You can find it at www.lamblion.com. It is not a static site. Our Web Minister, Nathan Jones, is on the site daily, constantly updating it and responding to questions from people all over the world. You will find many articles on the site about every aspect of Bible prophecy. You will also find back issues of our magazine and copies of our TV programs that you can watch online. The site also contains a store where you can purchase any of our study materials. Take a moment to send Nathan Jones a tough question today! ✚



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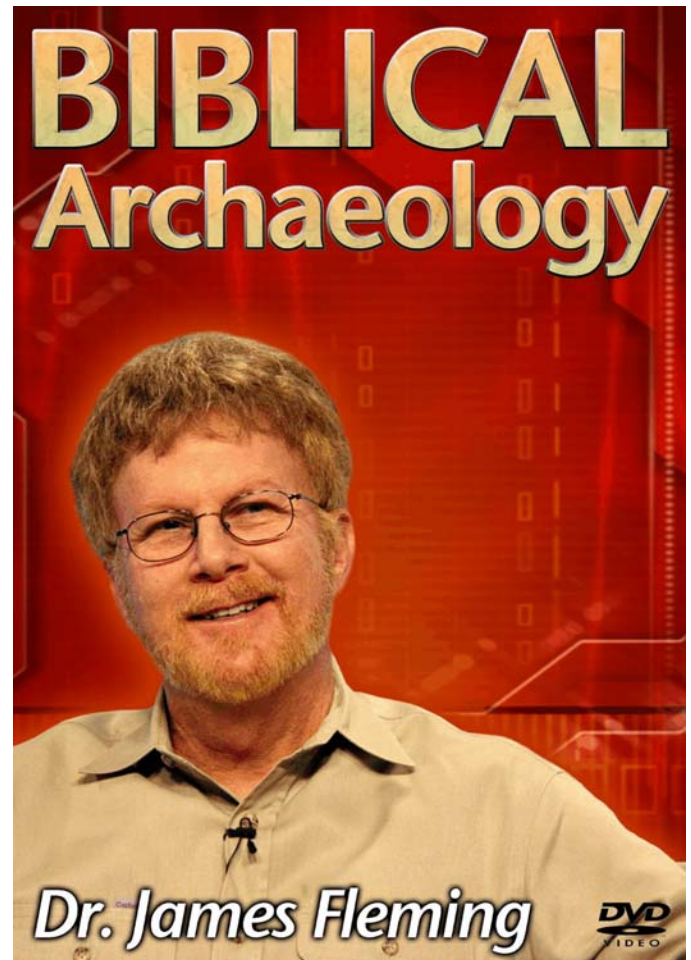
New Video Album

All four of our recent television interviews with Dr. James Fleming have been edited together to produce a new video album called "Biblical Archaeology."

Dr. Fleming is widely recognized as one of Christendom's greatest experts on biblical archaeology. Back in 1969 when he was a student in Israel, he discovered the location of the ancient Eastern Gate that existed in the time of Jesus. That discovery made him world famous in archaeological circles. He remained in Israel over the next three decades sharpening his skills as a teacher of biblical archaeology.

He developed a teaching center in southern Jerusalem where both students and tourists could go to learn how people lived in the First Century. He later moved his teaching center to a western suburb of Jerusalem called Ein Kerem. Today he heads up the Explorations in Antiquity Center located near La Grange, Georgia.

In the four fascinating programs contained in this album, Dr. Fleming discusses the importance of biblical archaeology, the significance of the Dead Sea



Scrolls, and the relationship of the Eastern Gate to the location of the ancient Jewish Temple. In the final interview, he discusses a wide range of archaeological issues such as the sites of Mount Sinai, the Mount of Transfiguration, and the tomb of Jesus.

The running time of the video is approximately 80 minutes. In addition to individual study, this series of 20 minute programs would make a great discussion and teaching tool for Bible study groups.

To order a copy, call **800-705-8316** Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm Central time. The cost is \$12 plus shipping. ❖



Dave Reagan, Jim Fleming and Nathan Jones on the TV set.