

LAMPLIGHTER

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

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**What Child
Is This?**



Observations by the Editor

The Miracle of the Incarnation

Dr. David R. Reagan

All year round, I keep a small manger scene on my desk at home to remind me daily of the miracle of the incarnation.

To me, it is simply mind-boggling to think that God loved Mankind enough, despite our sinful wretchedness, to send His precious Son to die for our sins so that we might be reconciled to our Creator. What love! What amazing grace!

The virgin birth of Jesus has to be considered one of the greatest miracles of history, together with the resurrection. Yet, philosophers and scientists scoff at the virgin birth as nothing but a "childish myth." Jewish leaders, from the earliest of times, have written it off as "a cruel hoax." Saddest of all, many modern day Christian theologians contend that it is "a non-essential legend."

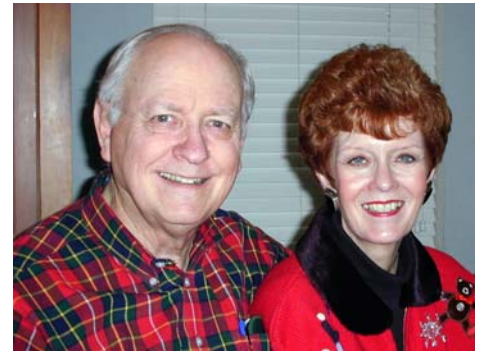
Today, the virgin birth is flagrantly denied by professors at many Christian seminaries. In fact, I would venture to say that it is the most ridiculed doctrine in the Christian faith. It is usually dismissed as nothing but a "johnny-come-lately myth" conjured up by a bunch of ignorant shepherds and fishermen in the First Century.

God fully anticipated these attacks, and as part of His refutation, He saw to it that most of the information in the Bible about the virgin birth was written by a highly educated man named Luke who was anything but an uneducated shepherd or fisherman. He was, in fact, a medical doctor who fully understood how a baby was conceived.

Why is the virgin birth so essential to the Christian faith? I would argue that there are three reasons.

First, it relates to the integrity of the Bible as God's Word. The Bible says point-blank that Jesus was born of a virgin. If that is not true, then what can we believe in the Bible?

If what it says about the birth of Jesus is fiction, then how can we believe what it says about His death and resurrection?



Dave and Ann Reagan, Christmas 1999.

Second, it relates to the integrity of Jesus as Messiah. In order for Jesus to be our Savior, three conditions had to be met:

- a) He had to be Human. No angel could die for our sins.
- b) He had to be Divine. A mere mortal could not bear the infinite price that had to be paid for our sins.
- c) He had to be Sinless. A sinner could not die for the sins of others.

The virgin birth guaranteed the fulfillment of all three of these conditions:

- a) Because He was born of Mary, He was Human.
- b) Because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, He was Divine.
- c) Because He was born holy, without a sin nature, He was qualified to serve as our Savior.

Finally, the concept of the virgin birth was not some afterthought. It was clearly prophesied hundreds and even thousands of years before Jesus was born. The very first Messianic prophecy in the Bible is found in Genesis 3:15 where we are told that the Messiah will be born of the seed of woman.

Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be born of a virgin and that He would be God in the flesh (Isaiah 7:14). Jeremiah reinforced this in his prophecies (Jeremiah 31:22). And an angel of God confirmed it to both Mary (Luke 1:26-37) and Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25). ✚

The cover painting is by an unknown artist and dates from the late 19th Century. It hangs in a Catholic parish church in Marianka, Slovakia. The image was supplied by iStockphoto.com.

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What Child is This?

Thoughts for the Christmas Season

Wendy Wippel

It's the Christmas season, and amid the baking and the bustling and the bows, it's easy to lose sight of what the fuss is all about — a baby. As the old carol asks, "What child is this?"

There's a lot riding on your answer. Because that baby is the central figure of human history. Human history, in fact, is divided into two eras (BC and AD) by His existence. (Your birth date? Counted from His.)



"Virgin of the Lilies" (1899) by the French painter, William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905).

- He never traveled more than 100 miles from home, but His followers permeated every country in the world with His story.
- He never wrote a book, but more have been written about Him than anyone else in history, by far.
- The first book about Him, the Bible, has been translated into more than 500 languages, and portions of it into more than 3000 languages. The first runner-up, believe it

or not, is Pinocchio. Only 260.

- He had only 12 disciples, but billions of people discuss His teachings every day. According to one Harvard professor (not a Christian), the Sermon on the Mount alone represents the "most luminous, most quoted, most analyzed, most contested, most influential moral and religious discourse in all of human history." The professor adds, "This may sound like an overstatement, but it is not."
- He was homeless during His public life, but most of the world's most beautiful buildings were built in His honor (Notre Dame, Westminster Abbey, Hagia Sophia, Chartres, St. John's Cathedral, and so on.)
- He died as a criminal, but today thousands of names of cities and countries memorialize His life. (San Salvador, for example, which means Holy Savior.)
- He never married, but more wedding vows have asked His blessing than any other.
- He never had kids, but there's a really good chance you're named after one of his family or his friends.
- Untold numbers of people throughout history have willingly gone to their deaths rather than renounce His name.

It begs the question, "What Child IS This?"

Author Ralph Waldo Emerson (an atheist) observed that the name of Jesus was not so much written as ploughed into the history of the world. And author H.G. Wells (also an atheist) said this:

An historian like myself finds the picture centering irresistibly around the life and character of this most significant man . . . The historian's test of an individual's greatness is . . . did he start men to thinking along fresh lines with a vigor that persisted after him? By this test Jesus stands first.

Jesus is recognized by skeptic and saint alike as the turning point of history. What child IS this?

We've had 2000 years to speculate: A really moral man? A great philosopher? A champion of social justice? A pacifist? A mythical figure? A revolutionary? A fruitcake? An example for all of us to follow?

Those really aren't the right questions, though. The real question is "Who does He think He is?" And Jesus, tellingly, said none of the above. Jesus said that He came to "seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10 - NKJV). Jesus said that He came to "give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). In fact, He said that He came specifically for one moment in time, His crucifixion (John 12:27). And Jesus said that He came

to be the make-or-break issue in your life and mine: “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind” (John 9:39).

What child is this? We all have to answer that question for ourselves. And eternity rides on our answer. Why? Because God created humans to be with Him. But you probably know what happened next — Adam and Even disobeyed the one rule that God established, and humanity became tainted with sin. And as descendants of Adam and Eve, we inherited that condition.

We’re all SIN positive.

The problem is that sin can’t survive in the presence of the holiness of God. But that same God still loves us and wants us to be with Him. So Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. We’re what was lost.

Some Christmas carols call Jesus another name: Emmanuel. It means “God with us.” And Jesus, God in the form of a man, came to earth to make a bridge. A bridge described in a lot of different places in the Bible:

To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).

He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life (John 5:24).

For God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

Maybe you’re thinking, “That’s great for you, but it’s just not my thing.” Or, “I have my own faith.” Or, “We all worship the same God.”

Then what child is this? One that made some pretty amazing statements:

I am the way, the truth, the life. No man comes to the father but through me (John 14:6).

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me (Matthew 28:18).

Nobody else said things like this. Not Mohammed. Not Confucius. Not Buddha. Not Joseph Smith. Nobody.

People these days say that makes Christianity exclusive. Except that Jesus also said that whosoever believes in Him can



“Madonna and Child” (c. 1510) by the Venetian painter, Giovanni Bellini (c. 1430-1516).

have eternal life. Whosoever.

So what child is this? You can call Him a liar. You can call Him a lunatic. Or you can call him Lord. “Undecided” isn’t really an option. He didn’t mean for it to be.

Jesus was crucified because He claimed to be the Messiah, a Messiah described in Isaiah as “wounded for our transgressions,” whose chastisement made peace for us with God. Jesus said that He came to give us life as a ransom for many. Nobody else said that. Not Mohammed. Not Confucius. Not Buddha. Not Joseph Smith. Nobody.

That’s what sets Jesus apart. Only He laid down His life for your sins and mine. And when He died on that cross (a fact documented in Roman records) it would have certainly seemed that was the last history would hear of Him.

But the cross that He died on is now the world’s most common symbol, engraved on tombstones, mounted in and on churches, scattered on hillsides and hung around a whole lot of necks. (And at Ground Zero — at least for now.)

So what child is this? That’s the question. And the answer, as G. K Chesterton observed:

Since Jesus died on the cross it has never been quite enough to say that “God is in His heaven and all is right with the world,” since, according to the Bible, “God left His heavens to set it right.”

God, in the form of Jesus, left heaven to seek and save that which was lost, meaning you and me. When He died on the cross, God was saying that He loves you. He Himself came to earth to give His life as your ransom. It was the God of all the universe, whispering into your ears, “I do.” And that God, who still loves you, stands at the altar, waiting for your answer. He’ll wait. He has all eternity to do so. Do you? ✚



Wendy Wippel is a molecular biologist who specializes in genetics. She has conducted research for the University of Cincinnati and the Center for Disease Control. She focuses on medical writing, but she also does a lot of writing concerning biblical topics. This article first appeared in *The Omega Letter* in 2013.

Two Anointed Christmas Songs

What Child Is This?

Words by William C. Dix
Music: "Greensleeves"

What child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies He in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.

Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross He borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The babe, the son of Mary!

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

Raise, raise the song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
The babe, the son of Mary!

William C. Dix (1837-1898) was an English writer of hymns and carols. He was born in Bristol, the son of a local surgeon. He was educated at the Grammar School, Bristol, for a mercantile career, and became manager of a maritime insurance company in Glasgow where he spent most of his life.

James Moffatt, an expert on Christian hymns, declared that "few modern writers have shown so signal a gift as his for the difficult art of hymn-writing." His original hymns are found in most modern hymn-books.

In addition to *What Child Is This?*, his hymns and carols include *As with Gladness Men of Old*, *To You, O Lord*, *Our Hearts We Raise* and *Alleluia! Sing to Jesus*. He wrote more than 200 poems and hymns over the course of his life, over 40 of them related to Christmas.



William C. Dix

At the age of 29 Dix was struck with a near-fatal illness and consequently suffered months confined to his bed. During this time he became severely depressed. Yet, it was during this period that he began to write hymns. He died at the age of 61 and was buried at his parish church in Cheddar, Somerset, England. ✚

Mary Did You Know?

Words by Mark Lowry
Music by Buddy Greene

Mary, did you know
That your baby boy will one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know
That your baby boy will save our sons and daughters?
Did you know
That your baby boy has come to make you new?
This child that you've delivered
Will soon deliver you

Mary, did you know
That your baby boy will give sight to a blind man?
Mary, did you know
That your baby boy will calm a storm with His hand?
Did you know
That your baby boy has walked where angels trod?
And when you kiss your little baby
You've kissed the face of God

Mary, did you know?
The blind will see
The deaf will hear
And the dead will live again
The lame will leap
The dumb will speak
The praises of the Lamb

Mary, did you know
That your baby boy is Lord of all creation?
Mary, did you know
That your baby boy will one day rule the nations?
Did you know
That your baby boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?
This sleeping child you're holding
Is the Great I Am

Oh Mary did you know?

Most people think of Mark Lowry as a Christian comedian, but he is also a very talented musician. For a dozen years he was a member of Bill Gaither's vocal band.

But his most enduring legacy is likely to be this song he wrote in 1984 when the leaders of the church he was attending in Nashville, Tennessee asked him if he would write a musical for Advent. As he was writing, he came up with a series of questions he would like to ask Mary, and he included them in the musical as a monologue.

Six years later in 1990, he handed the words to Buddy Greene, the very talented harmonica player, and Greene supplied the music for the song. ✚



Mark Lowry

Should Christians Celebrate Christmas?

Dr. David R. Reagan

Every year during the Christmas season I start receiving critical messages from professing Christians who condemn me for celebrating Christmas. Some verge on outright hate mail. They seem to be prompted by Christmas articles I have written in the past. Or, they are offended by Christmas decorations on our television set.

I am lectured in no uncertain terms about how Christmas is a pagan holiday and that no true Christian would ever stoop so low as to recognize the day in any way.

These messages always remind me of the ones I receive throughout the year from Seventh Day Adventists who condemn me for going to church on Sunday instead of Saturday, the true Sabbath.

It seems I just can't get my days straight!

I respond to both in the same way — by pointing to what the Apostle Paul had to say about such things in Romans 14. In the first 13 verses of that chapter he makes it crystal clear that believers have the freedom in Christ to give, or not to give, spiritual significance to any day they please. Paul expressed it this way (Romans 14:5-6a):

One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord . . .

Paul concludes this whole section with a strong admonition that we are not to judge one another over such peripheral issues (Romans 14:13).

Thus, if I want to give spiritual significance to December 25, I have the freedom in Christ to do so, and no other believer has a right to condemn me for doing so. Nor do I have the right to condemn those who refuse to give any spiritual significance to the day. The same is true regarding the day of the week we choose to worship the Lord.

Regarding Christmas, some object by arguing that in ancient times the day was a pagan holiday when the Roman god, Saturn, was given special honor. (The Romans mistakenly thought December 25 was the day of the Winter Solstice.) All this is true, but so what?

I don't worship any false sun god on Christmas. I rejoice over the Incarnation — the true God becoming flesh.

This argument reminds me of those who denounce the Star of David as a pagan symbol. There is no doubt that it has been used by pagans from time to time in history, but that does not invalidate it as a modern day symbol of Israel.

By this twisted logic, we Christians should abandon the rainbow as a symbol of God's faithfulness to His promises because it has been adopted as the symbol of the current day

Sexual Perversion Movement.

I fully realize that Jesus was not born on December 25. He was most likely born during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles in the Fall of the year, in either September or October.

But I intend to continue celebrating the incredible miracle and blessing of the incarnation on December 25. Together with the angels, I am going to rejoice over the "good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people" — namely, Jesus (Luke 2:10).

If that offends you, then just pray for me and skip the day. But please don't send me any self-righteous condemnations. Thank you! ✚

When Was Jesus Born?

According to Luke 1:24-26, Mary conceived Jesus in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy with John the Baptist. This means that Jesus was born 15 months after the angel Gabriel appeared to Elizabeth's husband, Zacharias, and informed him that his wife would bear a child.

According to Luke 1:5, Zacharias was a priest of the division of Abijah. Luke 1:8 says that Gabriel appeared to Zacharias while he was serving as a priest in the Temple.

We know from the Talmud and other sources that the division of Abijah served as priests during the second half of the fourth month of the Jewish religious calendar — which would have put it in late June (the Jewish religious calendar begins in March with Passover).

Fifteen months later would place the birth of Jesus in the seventh month of the Jewish calendar. That would be in the fall of the year, in either late September or early October. His conception, not His birth, would have occurred in December of the previous year.

The seventh month of the Jewish calendar is the month of the Feast of Tabernacles. John 1:14, speaking of Jesus as the Word, says: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." The word "dwelt" that is used here is the Greek word "skenoō" which literally means "to tabernacle"!

So, when God came to earth to tabernacle among Mankind, it appears that He timed His arrival in the Bethlehem manger to coincide with the Feast of Tabernacles. That was only appropriate, for the Feast of Tabernacles is the most joyous of all the Jewish feasts. It is, in fact, their feast of thanksgiving.

The total meaning of that feast will not be fulfilled until the Lord returns again to tabernacle among Men for a thousand years while He reigns over the earth from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem.

Isn't the Word of God marvelous? ✚

Does Matthew's Gospel Disqualify Jesus as the Messiah?

Pat Franklin

(Editor's note: Pat Franklin and her husband, Alan, are both journalists who live in the London, England area. They are the editors and publishers of a wonderful Internet news site called "The Free Press" — www.thefreepressonline.co.uk.)

As much of the world prepares once again to celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, I am awestruck by the wonderful record He has left us in the gospel of Matthew, called by some "the most important document in the universe."

Matthew's is the gospel which presents the Lord Jesus as the King, the legitimate ruler of Israel and the world.

It just occurred to me this morning how Matthew attests to this in so many ways just in his opening few chapters. He is like an expert attorney presenting evidence in court, setting out the facts and giving us the history and the credentials of the Messiah, the promised Savior, future King of Israel and all the world.

A Serious Problem

But incredibly, he begins by presenting Joseph's genealogy — which would actually disqualify Jesus from being the King!

Joseph's genealogy puts him in David's kingly line, but goes through David's son Solomon and his descendant Jeconiah. The bad king Jeconiah was so offensive that he was put under a curse that none of his descendants would sit on the throne (Jeremiah 22:30).

So Joseph's descendants would be disqualified! Jesus could never be King of Israel if Joseph were His biological father.

But the end of the genealogy contains the words "Joseph was the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ (Anointed One)." And then Matthew goes on to present the virgin birth fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 that a virgin would conceive and bear a son who would be called Immanuel, God With Us.

So the expert attorney, Matthew, gives us at the outset a fact — the Jeconiah connection — that every Jew would immediately seize on which would disqualify Jesus from ever being King. And then Matthew proceeds to show how, in fact, Jesus actually is the true Messiah, entitled to the kingship, the promised "seed of a woman" prophesied in Genesis 3:15, the first prophecy of the virgin birth. For God, not Joseph, is Jesus' Father.

For the genealogy of Mary, you have to go to Luke's gospel chapter 3, and you will not find Jeconiah listed there, but you will find King David. So Mary is also in the kingly line, and her family tree goes not through Solomon, but another of David's sons — Nathan. This avoids the curse on Solomon's descendant, Jeconiah, and gives the Lord Jesus full entitlement to David's throne.



Alan and Pat Franklin

A Serious Question

Do you accept the virgin birth, dear reader? The Bible teaches it, but many who call themselves Christians today do not believe it and apparently some seminaries and colleges actually teach against it!

A friend of mine was once a member of a Baptist church, and she was very upset at things there. At one church meeting she asked the pastor publically: "Do you believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ?" He had to admit he did not. He is no longer there.

Oh, dear friends, Jesus was born of a virgin, just as prophesied. His birth was supernatural. We have a supernatural Savior!

And He wants all people everywhere to know Him. Just imagine — the King of the whole universe has issued an open invitation to YOU to come to Him!

Another Serious Question

Will you reply?

Will you accept His amazing grace in noticing each one of us? Romans 10:13 tells us that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved (from Hell). What a stupendous offer — free salvation, eternal life, forgiveness of all our sins!

And the Book of Revelation chapter 22:17 says that whoever desires, let him take of the water of life freely. The Lord Jesus Himself in the gospel of John chapter 6, verse 47, tells us the very simple fact that if we believe in Him, we HAVE eternal life!

How can anyone fail to put their trust in the Lord Jesus, Son of God, born of a virgin, executed in our place on the cross of Calvary?

A prayer to consider carefully: "Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God, born of a virgin, executed in my place to pay the penalty of all my sins. I believe You were buried and rose again on the third day. I put my trust in You. Please make me one of Your people. Amen."

If you choose to churlishly reject King Jesus, you have lots of company. Jesus told us that the way to Hell is broad and many choose to take that broad way (Matthew 7:13).

The decision is yours. It is a decision that will determine your eternity. ✚

The Hope of Christmas

Elwood McQuaid

(Editor's note: Elwood McQuaid served as the executive director of The Friends of Israel Ministry for 12 years before becoming the editor of the ministry's magazine, *Israel My Glory*. He also served for many years as the host of the ministry's daily and weekly radio programs. Today he is a consulting editor to the magazine. This article appeared in the magazine's issue of November-December 2015, and is reprinted with permission.)

Atheists chalked up another win in August 2015 when the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) forced the Royster Middle School in Chanute, Kansas, to remove a print of Warner Sallman's famous 1941 painting, *Head of Christ*. The FFRF claimed the painting, which had hung on a wall by the school entrance for more than half a century, endorsed the establishment of Christianity as an official state religion.



Elwood McQuaid

The school superintendent had the painting removed promptly because the atheists threatened the school district with protracted litigation that would have crippled its limited resources, materially affecting the school's ability to provide adequate educational services to the community.

The portrait was brought to the FFRF's attention by a lone disgruntled individual who took a picture of it and forwarded it to the foundation. The fact that almost everyone in the town of 9,200 people and 30 churches approved of the print was inconsequential.

The portrait was hung at the middle school in 1956 in memory of a student, Duane Eastburn, a 14-year-old ninth grader who collapsed in the gymnasium and died there that year. Funds for the portrait reportedly came from the student council's budget, and a small brass plaque on the frame notes that it was placed as a memorial to Duane Eastburn.

A Hopeless Credo

The Chanute, Kansas incident raises a question that demands an answer, one that could be posed to every God-denying militant in the Western world. If the FFRF were required to place a plaque honoring young Duane, what would it say?

Perhaps it would bear the words of the late Anne Nicol Gaylor: "There are no gods, no devils, no angels, no heaven or hell."

Ms. Gaylor was the principle founder of the Freedom from Religion foundation, and her public life reflected her two passions: atheism and abortion. Among her celebrated lawsuits was *Gaylor v. Reagan*, contesting then-President Ronald Reagan's declaration of 1983 as "The Year of the Bible."

So what does the FFRF actually offer humanity? To Duane

Eastburn and the billions of others who have passed into eternity, the organization and its atheistic fellow travelers would only have been able to say, "We have no hope." Instead of Warner Sallman's depiction of Jesus, which celebrates hope, they could only hang a morbidly hopeless, atheistic message that the here-and-now is all there is.

One wonders why in a society tolerant of virtually every stripe of deviant behavior and bizarre conduct imaginable, would some people campaign to destroy faith? Faith poses no threat to them. In fact, true believers promote peace, tolerance and social stability — qualities that built America and the West into the greatest societies the world has ever known.

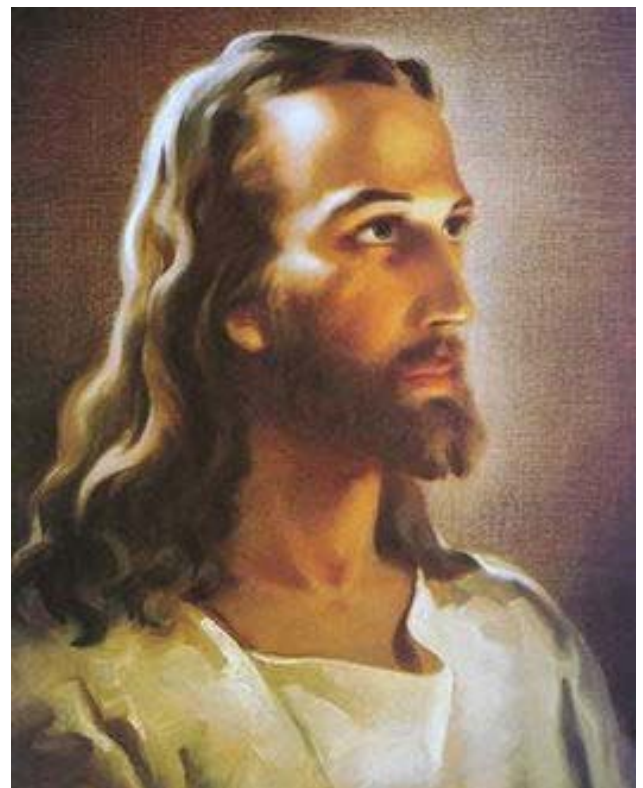
To take pleasure and a type of perverse satisfaction in forcing the removal of a memorial to a 14 year-old boy seems incomprehensible. Such actions merely confirm the grave ramifications of the contest for the hearts and minds of human beings.

Down-With-Christmas Crusade

Christmas is the peak season when atheists and their ilk gird for battle. Now is when these self-appointed warriors against God wield their swords wildly, trying to annihilate all evidence of Christian reverence and celebration.

One of their primary centers of activity is the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison, where the FFRF maintains a sign declaring the commemoration of Christ's birth a contemptible delusion. The full text of the plaque reads:

At this season of THE WINTER SOLSTICE may reason prevail. There are no gods, no devil, no angels no heaven or hell. There is only our natural world. Religion is but myth and superstition that hardens hearts and enslaves minds.



"Head of Christ" by Warner Sallman, 1941.

While the FFRF trumpets denial, some of its compatriots turn to mockery. Also posted at the Wisconsin State Capitol is a large poster sponsored by the Atheists, Humanists and Agnostics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Bearing an image of tangled spaghetti, the copy reads as follows: “BEHOLD THE FLYING SPAGHETTI MONSTER. HE BOILED FOR YOUR SINS! BE TOUCHED BY HIS NOODLY APPENDAGE BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!”

The eruptions of anti-God, anti-Christian vitriol that we will witness across America over the coming weeks leading up to Christmas embody more than a faux intellectual argument over the separation of church and state. They represent an all-encompassing, impassioned aggression aimed not only at the exercise of religion in the public arena, but at every church, Christian organization, and professing Christian believer as well. Above all, they are attacks on Jesus Christ and all He embodies.



No Contest

In reality, the Atheists, Humanists and Agnostics have little chance of universal success. Despite the fact that many of our “progressive,” liberal academic institutions and social revisionists are aquiver with the current fad of godlessness, several factors forecast their downfall:

- 1) **They are decisively outnumbered.** For example, the Freedom From Religion Foundation boasts a membership of “more than 22,500.” According to a 2014 Pew Research poll, 70.6 percent of Americans still say they believe in Jesus Christ. That means seven out of every 10 people in the United States (population 321.6 million — in 2015) in some way identify with Christianity.
- 2) **They bring a message of despair.** They try to convince people that the atheistic life holds hope, promise and expectation, when it really encapsulates the complaint of the ancient heathen: “We go down in death, but we make no return in the morning.” Death without a blessed destiny is not a message of hope but, rather, a grim reminder of a line from William Henley’s poem, *Invictus*: “Beyond this place of wrath and tears / Looms but the Horror of the shade.”
- 3) **They are no match for the Lord of lords and the eternal benefits He will surely deliver.** When the swaddled Christ Child was placed in a loving Jewish mother’s arms more than 2,000 years ago, the world was given a new beginning — one that fulfilled every

jot and tittle of what the prophets of old promised. He was a Child of promise unlike any other. He was destined to be a King — one of quite a different kind. Someday He will return to assume His earthly throne in a literal Millennial Kingdom. Until then, He reigns in the hearts and lives of innumerable believers the world over.

Because Jesus came to Earth and endured the cross, He fulfilled every hope-sustaining promise enumerated in God’s Word to those who believe. And, amazingly, the spiritual treasures He imparts are not restricted to the rich, powerful and privileged — which is man’s way of doing things — but to individuals like you and me.

- He promised peace; we have it.
- He promised comfort; we have it.
- He promised a law of love to live by; we have it.
- He promised security; we have it.
- He promised His presence, never to leave us; we have it.
- He promised eternal life; we have it.
- He promised a home in Heaven; we have it.

Are these things real? Ask the countless millions of believers who have received them in their own lives over the millennia. Inquire of those still streaming to Him and finding new life. They’ll tell you in one burst of affirmation. What Christ offers is real for now and forever. His is a story that never grows old.

I was in Jerusalem on Christmas Eve many years ago. I rose extremely early because it was my departure day, and I wanted to be home in time to celebrate Christmas with my family. As I looked out my hotel window, day was breaking over the city. Nothing seemed to be stirring.

To my right, strung from the tower of the YMCA building, was a string of Christmas lights. Far off in the dawning winter sky hung a single bright star. As I stood there, mesmerized by the sight, it was as though time had receded to the morning when God became man, a few miles down the road. And I was thankful.

Within hours, I’d be home, surrounded by a happy family, all living to the full the “joy to the world” of Christmas. And it was all real because Jesus made it real. We love Him, and we love one another with something far beyond the emotion of the moment.

To all Atheists, Humanists and Agnostics: We pray for you with genuine compassion for what you are missing now and what you will never know without faith in Jesus Christ after you pass from this life.

Scripture says, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37). Christ has never rejected anyone who has come to Him, and I can guarantee He won’t start with you.

Merry Christmas! ❖



The Forgotten Man of Christmas

Dr. David R. Reagan

I love the Christmas story. I love it so much that I keep a tiny Nativity scene on my desk all year long. It is a constant reminder to me that God loved His creation so much that He was willing to become flesh so that He could die for our sins to make it possible for us to be reconciled to Him.

In telling the story year after year, we focus, as we should, on the precious baby lying in the feeding trough — the baby who is Emmanuel, “God with us.” Almost equal attention is often given to the baby’s virgin mother, Mary. We also hear about the chorus of angels who appeared to the shepherds, and we hear songs sung about the Wise Men who came from afar, seeking the king whose sign they had seen in the heavens.

All of that is fine and proper. But in the midst of all the remembrance and celebration, one key character is usually forgotten and that, of course, is Joseph, the stepfather of Jesus.

Perhaps Joseph remains in the shadows because we know so little about him. We can rightfully agree that Mary was probably around the age of 13, since that was the age of marriage in those days. But there are no clues as to Joseph’s age. There are church traditions that say he was an older man and may have been a widower with an existing family, but no one knows for sure.

There are only three things we know about him for certain:

- He was of the tribe of Judah, descended from David through Solomon (Matthew 1:1-16).
- He was a craftsman, most likely a carpenter (Matthew 13:55).
- He was a righteous man before God (Matthew 1:19).

He must have also been a man of compassion and forgiveness because when he discovered that Mary, his betrothed, was pregnant, he could have had her publicly humiliated and stoned to death. Instead, we are told that he decided “to put her away secretly” (Matthew 1:19).

It was at this point that God intervened and spoke to him in the first of four supernatural dreams. In the dream, the Lord assured him that he should not be afraid to take Mary as his wife “for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:20).

About two years later, Joseph had a second dream in which the Lord warned him that Herod was going to search for the Christ Child and destroy Him. He was told to take his family and flee to Egypt. He obeyed this command immediately, and Jesus was delivered from the horrible massacre of children that oc-

curred in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:13-16).

After the death of Herod, while the family was still in Egypt, God spoke to Joseph in a third dream, telling him to “return to the land of Israel” (Matthew 2:19-20). He evidently intended to settle somewhere in Judea, but en route he experienced a fourth dream in which he was warned that Judea was not safe. In response to this dream, he headed back to the Galilee to his home town of Nazareth from which he and Mary had begun their perilous journey several years before (Matthew 2:22-23).

The last we hear of Joseph is in Luke 2:41-51 where we are told that during one of the family’s annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Passover, Jesus was accidentally left behind when the family’s caravan departed to return



“The Son of a Carpenter” by François Lafon, 1896. This painting hangs in the sanctuary of the Church of St. Joseph in Nazareth, Israel.

home. Jesus was 12 years old when this happened. This story reveals what a pious man Joseph was, for it was a long, arduous, dangerous, and expensive journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem. Yet Joseph took his family every year.

Joseph evidently died before Jesus began His public ministry at the age of 30, because no mention is made of him thereafter, except for the fact that when Jesus began teaching in Nazareth the first time, the people proclaimed in amazement, “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?” (Matthew 13:55-56). The very wording of this statement indicates that Joseph was dead by this time since he was not mentioned by name among the living relatives.

From the little we know about him, I think we can conclude that Joseph was a godly man who communed with the Lord, observed the Law of Moses, and who undoubtedly raised his stepson to honor God and His Word.

We desperately need more fathers like Joseph today. ✚

Honoring Mary

Dr. David R. Reagan

There are two things that have always bothered me about Mary, the mother of Jesus.

First, I have been appalled by the efforts of the Catholic Church to deify her — to make her into a god.

Second, I have been troubled by the way in which Protestants have ignored her — most likely because of the attention she has received from Catholics.

Catholics deny that they have made her a god, but their actions, and even their words, testify otherwise. It is not at all unusual to find her referred to in Catholic literature as “co-redemptrix,” “the gate to Heaven,” “our advocate” and “mediatrix.”

Furthermore, the Catholic church has attempted to elevate Mary to the status of deity through four unscriptural doctrines:

1) The Immaculate Conception of Mary —

Proclaimed by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854. Most people, including Catholics, think this refers to Mary’s miraculous conception of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. But no, it refers instead to a belief that Mary herself was born sinless and remained sinless throughout her life. There is no biblical basis for this heresy. The Scriptures teach that Jesus alone was born sinless and remained sinless to the moment of His death.

2) The Assumption of Mary —

Proclaimed by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950. This is the belief that Mary was taken to Heaven, body and soul, where she was glorified and “exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things.” The Pope’s declaration did not make it clear whether this assumption occurred before or after her death. Again, there is no biblical basis for this doctrine.

3) The Perpetual Virginity of Mary —

This doctrine is based on tradition. It states that Mary remained a virgin throughout her life. Once again, there is no biblical basis for this belief. In fact, the Scriptures indicate the opposite, for they name four brothers of Jesus and mention that he had two sisters, which are unnamed (Mark 6:3 and Matthew 13:55-56).

4) Mary as Co-Redemptrix —

This is not an official doctrine of the Catholic Church, although there have been many requests from Catholics for the Pope to declare it a dogma. Despite the Pope’s failure to do so to date, many of the Church’s spokesmen treat her as a co-redeemer, equal with Jesus, by referring to her as such and by encouraging Catholics to pray to her.

Catholics are often shocked to discover how little is said about Mary in the Scriptures and how the Scriptures treat her as



“The Assumption of Mary” (c. 1626) by the Flemish painter, Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640).

a human being and not a god. Pastor John MacArthur has emphasized this point in his writings:

Scripture actually has very little to say about Mary. There’s no description of her physical appearance, nothing about her life, her later years after Christ’s death or her own death and burial. And when she does appear with the disciples and other believers on the Day of Pentecost, she’s not an object of worship or even a leader in the early church — she’s just one among many. There simply are not biblical examples of anyone ever praying to her, honoring her or venerating her.

She also does not play any role in the New Testament presentations of the Gospel. In Paul’s theological treatise called the book of Romans, the only thing he says about her is that she was “a descendent of David” (Romans 1:3). And in his letter to the Galatians in which he presents a lengthy explanation of the Gospel, he simply refers to the fact that Christ was “born of a woman” (Galatians 4:4). In neither passage does he even mention her by name!

All this reminds me of something I used to experience every December between 1980 and 2002 when I had a daily 15 minute radio program that was broadcast nationally. As we approached

Christmas each year, I would always devote one or two programs to Mary, and I would point out that she was a sinner like all the rest of us, and, like us, she needed a Savior.

The response was always an avalanche of messages assigning me to the deepest, darkest and hottest area of Hell!

The fact of the matter is that Mary herself realized that she needed a Savior and proclaimed that truth in the song she sang when she visited her relative, Elizabeth. She began with these words: "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in **God my Savior**" (Luke 1:46-47).



"The Visitation" (1502) by Italian painter Mariotto Albertinelli (1474-1515).

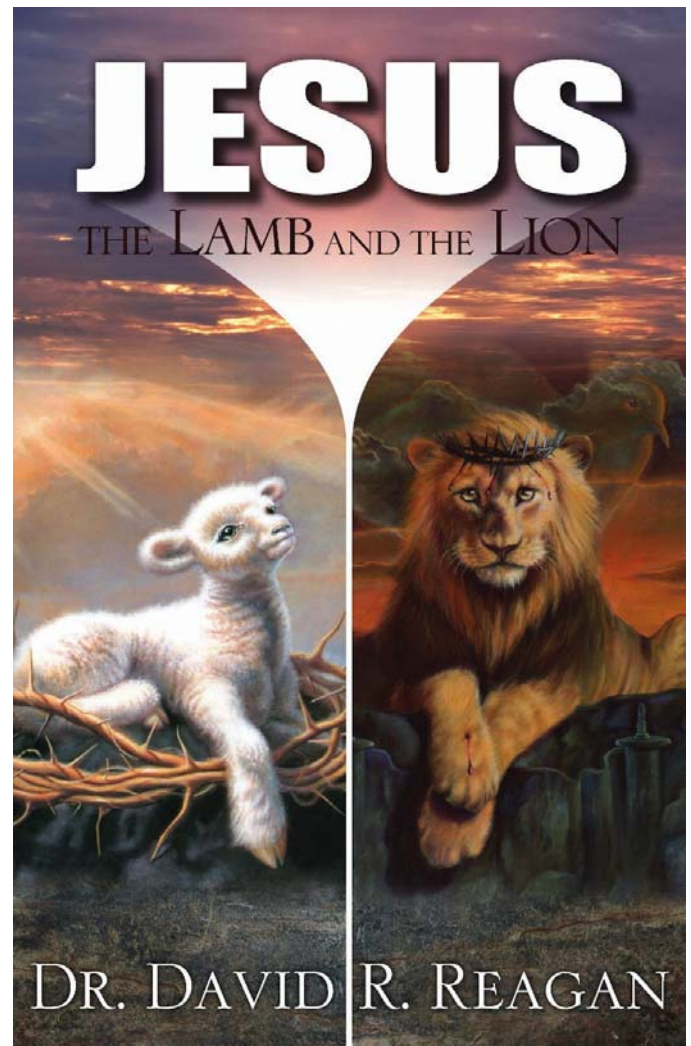
The elevation of Mary to deity is blasphemy. But it is also not proper to ignore her. She should be used as a model of teen age righteousness for our young people today.

The marrying age in Israel in her time was 13. She was already engaged to Joseph at the time the Angel Gabriel appeared to her and informed her that she would become the mother of the Messiah. In that culture, engagement was considered marriage, even though the marriage had not yet been consummated. To become pregnant during the waiting time was scandalous and could result in being stoned to death.

Mary was fully aware of all this. She also was aware of how a child is conceived, for when the angel informed her that she would become pregnant, her first response was, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34). The angel explained that "the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you . . ." (Luke 1:35). He then added, "For nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

When it became clear to Mary that it was God's will for her to give birth to the Messiah, she proclaimed, "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

To yield herself so completely to God's will, knowing that it could result in her husband divorcing her and her community rejecting her or even stoning her to death, took a lot of faith on Mary's part, and we should honor her for her incredible faith. ❖



The two great prophetic symbols of the Messiah that are found in the prophetic passages of the Old Testament prophets are the lamb and the lion. The Messiah is presented as a suffering lamb (Isaiah 53:7) and a conquering lion (Jeremiah 25:30). These symbols refer to the Messiah's first coming (the lamb) and His second coming (the lion).

This book presents a comprehensive survey of what both the Old and New Testaments have to say about the person and ministry of the Messiah. For example, Dr. Reagan presents an in-depth survey of the scriptures that firmly establishes Jesus as God in the flesh.

One of the most fascinating chapters focuses on the pre-incarnate Jesus and His appearances in history as "The Angel of the Lord."

Chapters relating to the Christmas season are "The Birth of Jesus in Prophecy" and "The Evidence of the Virgin Birth." The latter chapter is particularly important due to the fact that the virgin birth is one of the most mocked doctrines of Christianity. Dr. Reagan not only presents convincing proof of the virgin birth from the Scriptures, he also shows that a belief in the virgin birth is essential to the deity of Jesus and is thus one of the fundamentals of the faith.

The book contains 14 chapters about Jesus and runs 240 pages. It sells for \$20, including the cost of shipping. ❖

Mysteries of the Star of Bethlehem

Dr. David R. Reagan

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him." — Matthew 2:1-2

The star of Bethlehem has always intrigued people. What was it? Could it have been a comet or a meteor or a super-nova? What about a special alignment of planets?

The longevity of the star rules out a comet or a meteor. The star had to appear each night for several months in order to lead the magi all the way from Persia in the Far East. The possibility of a super-nova or a planetary alignment is ruled out by the fact that the star constantly moved, leading the magi first to Jerusalem and then to Bethlehem where the star hovered over the house where Mary and Joseph had moved to with the Christ Child (Matthew 2:9-11).

A Supernatural Alternative

The renowned Messianic Jewish scholar, Alfred Ederheim (1825-1889), proposed another solution to the mystery. He points out that the Greek word translated "star" really means "radiance." The "star" could therefore have been what the Jews called the "Shekinah" — that is, a physical manifestation of the glory of God in the form of a supernatural radiance.

The Jews experienced such a phenomenon in the wilderness of Sinai when for 40 years they were led about by a pillar of cloud in the day that became a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22). When the radiant cloud moved, they moved. When the cloud hovered, they pitched their tents and settled down (Numbers 9:15-23).

This Shekinah later resided in the Holy of Holies after the Temple of Solomon was built (2 Chronicles 7:1-3). Ezekiel describes how the Shekinah departed from the Temple in stages before God allowed the Temple to be destroyed by the Babylonians. First, the Shekinah moved from the Holy of Holies to the threshold of the Temple (Ezekiel 9:3). Then "the glory of the Lord" moved from the threshold to the Eastern Gate (Ezekiel 10:18-19). Finally, the Lord's presence moved to the Mount of Olives where it "stood over the mountain" before departing the city (Ezekiel 11:23).

The Shekinah is mentioned in the New Testament as being present at the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:9), at His transfiguration (Matthew 17:5), and at His ascension (Acts 1:9).

Considering the radiant and maneuverable qualities of the Shekinah that are demonstrated in these scriptures, I think it is

very likely that the "star" which led the magi was really the Shekinah glory of God.

The Attraction of the Star

Another mystery associated with the Bible's account of the magi is why did these men "from the east" follow the heavenly radiance? Their very title gives us a clue. Magi is a Persian term for a priestly caste of wise men who specialized in astrology, medicine, and natural science. The ancient historian Herodotus says they interpreted dreams and omens and claimed to have the gift of prophecy. Such men would naturally have been interested in an unusual heavenly radiance.

It is also very likely that they would have been familiar with the writings of Daniel who gained great renown as a wise man and interpreter of dreams in the Persian court of Nebuchadnezzar. If so, they would have known his prophecy of "the seventy weeks of years" which is recorded in Daniel 9:24-27.

This remarkable prophecy established the general time period of the Messiah's coming by indicating it would be 483 years after a Persian ruler issued an edict to rebuild Jerusalem. The magi had probably been counting down the years since the Jews had been sent back from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem, and they thus knew the general time period when the Messiah would be born.

Because of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, the magi would also have had access to the writings of Moses (the Torah), and from those writings, they may have come across the Messianic prophecy of Balaam that "a star shall come forth from Jacob" (Numbers 24:17).

The Inclusion of the Gentiles

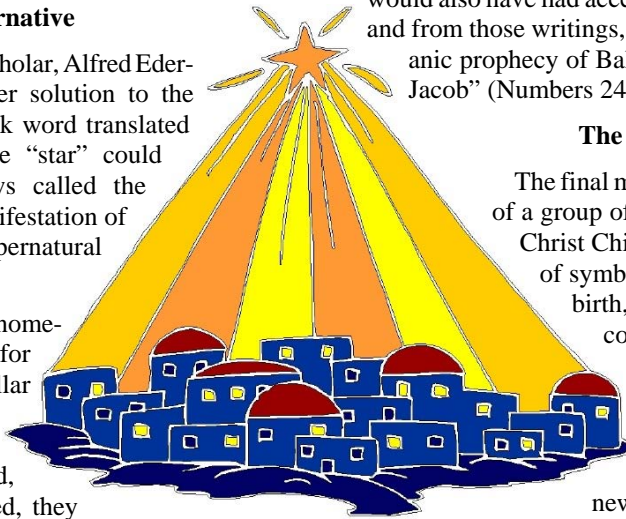
The final mystery is why God would open the eyes of a group of Gentile mystics and draw them to the Christ Child. Undoubtedly it was for the purpose of symbolizing the universal importance of the birth, to emphasize that although salvation comes from the Jews (John 4:22), it is intended for all peoples.

That was certainly the message of the angels who proclaimed to the Bethlehem shepherds that their good news of the birth of a Savior was for "all the people" (Luke 2:10-11).

This point was affirmed and emphasized forty days later when Mary and Joseph took their Son to the Temple "to present Him to the Lord" (Luke 2:22). As they entered the Temple, a prophet of God by the name of Simeon took the Christ Child into his arms, blessed God, and then announced:

My eyes have seen Thy salvation
Which Thou hast prepared in the
presence of all peoples,
A light of salvation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Thy people Israel.
— Luke 2:30-32

During this Christmas season, as you think about the star of Bethlehem that pointed Mankind to the First Coming of the Messiah, keep in mind that Jesus will soon return as "the bright morning star" (Revelation 22:16). ✚



The Wonder of Christmas

Colonel Tim Moore



Col. Tim Moore

Christmas holds a very special place in the heart of most Christians. It is a time for family and giving and good cheer. It arouses fond memories of pageants and living nativities and even Charlie Brown's Scripture-honoring special on television.

Most of us are intimately familiar with the story of Christmas — perhaps so much so that the mystery and wonder of the Incarnation of Jesus no longer fills us with awe. If you fall into that category, I hope this Christmas you'll consider once again the promise of peace the Mes-

siah's First Advent foretold.

Pondering the Birth of Jesus

Matthew and Luke describe the details surrounding Jesus' conception and His birth. Those narratives are surprisingly straightforward in their description of those events—as if virgins conceiving and angels appearing are regular occurrences!



Previous *Lamplighter* articles have focused on the faith and faithfulness of Mary and Joseph — Jesus' mother and surrogate father. Additionally, I've always found it instructive to consider Mary's response to all the events she witnessed. Luke says three different times that she stored up in her heart and treasured the fulfilled promises of God and that she pondered all that she experienced. Amidst the busy-ness of the Christmas season, we would be wise to meditate upon and ponder Jesus' birth.

The second aspect of Christmas that merits reflection is the reaction of people who looked forward to and then witnessed His actual arrival. Lowly shepherds, exalted magi, and angelic hosts alike demonstrated great excitement.

The shepherds hurried to see "that which the Lord [had made known to them]" (Luke 2:15). The wise men traveled from afar, eager to worship the newborn King. They "rejoiced exceedingly with great joy" when they realized that the baby was just a few miles away and also hurried to worship Him (Matthew 2:10). The account of the angel's declaration of great joy to the shepherds and the heavenly host's song of praise resonates with their joyful exuberance.



"Shepherds Abiding in the Fields" by Danish painter, Carl Heinrich Bloch (1834-1890).

Receiving Assurance From the Birth

When various individuals were made aware of the Messiah's soon arrival, they were either afraid or assured of joy. Zacharias, Joseph and even Mary were each told by their angelic messenger not to be afraid. As their role in God's plan was explained, their initial fear quickly changed to assurance.

Zacharias went home from the Temple believing that he and Elizabeth would have a son named John. Joseph awakened from a dream determined to do as the angel of the Lord had commanded him. And Mary submitted herself as a bondservant of the Lord and rejoiced in God her Savior. The shepherds likewise were overwhelmed with fear when they saw an angel of the Lord, but their fear quickly turned into eager joy. All of those people chose to believe in the promises prophesied. Their assurance led to great joy and a role in the Lord's nativity.

On the other hand, Herod, who fancied himself the king of the Jews and was surrounded by priests and scribes who rightfully described the prophecies surrounding the Messiah's birth,



“Adoration of the Shepherds” by Dutch painter, Gerard Van Honthorst (1592-1656).

was motivated only by fear. Afraid that the newborn and rightful King would threaten his power, he decreed that all the male babies in the vicinity of Bethlehem should be killed.

The Centrality of the Birth

As Christians, we need look no further than the calendar to realize that the advent of Jesus Christ stands as the central event in human history. Although secularists would like to remove any reference to Christ from our demarcation of time prior to and since the last 2,018 years, the fact remains that the world has adopted an approximated year of Jesus’ birth to be the hinge upon which human history pivots.

No other supposed holy person is recognized in such a manner. This is no minor point. God’s Prophetic Word points over and over again to two great revelations of the Messiah — once when He arrived as a Sacrificial Lamb, and again when He returns as the Lion of Judah. Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem rightfully divides all of human history. And, the last days of the world as we know it will culminate with His glorious return.

Expecting the Follow-up of the Birth

Finally, the gospel accounts of the events surrounding Jesus’ birth capture the expectation various eyewitnesses felt. Whether the shepherds, the magi, the angelic host, His parents or Simeon and Anna — all of them believed the promises of God, and they were inspired to anticipate the arrival of the Messiah.

The angels knew because God had revealed His plan of incarnation to them and commissioned them to share that good news (Luke 2:8-14). Mary and Joseph and the shepherds knew because of these specific angelic messengers. The magi knew to anticipate the Jewish Messiah because they had studied the prophecies in God’s Word (Numbers 24:17). (It is widely understood that these sages from the east would have been exposed

to the Jewish prophecies during the time of the Babylonian exile.) And, the Spirit of God Himself revealed to Simeon and Anna that they would see the Lord’s Messiah (Luke 2:25-38).

Do you share the same sense of high expectation about the Lord’s Second Advent? You have been given many prophetic signs to watch for — signs that will herald that you are living in the season of the Lord’s return. Those signs are converging today. Are you full of anxious expectation?

Where Do You Stand?

Does your heart thrill with the good news that Jesus has come? Do you have a **Peace** which passes all understanding? Do you ongoingly **Ponder** your Savior and resonate with **Excitement** and blessed **Assurance** that He is coming again?

Do you recognize the **Centrality** of both His First Advent and His soon return in human history and your own testimony, and do you live **Expecting** Him?

I pray that you do, and that this Christmas you will once again give “glory to God in the highest” while we wait for Him who was, and is, and is to come!

Maranatha! ✚

Col. Tim Moore is recently retired from the U. S. Air Force. He is a UPS pilot and pilot instructor, and he is serving in his tenth year in the Kentucky State Legislature. He also serves as an Associate Evangelist for Lamb & Lion Ministries, speaking at churches and conferences on weekends. Additionally, he also serves as the host of the Lamb & Lion pilgrimages to the Holy Land. You can contact him at tmoore@lamlion.com.

My Most Meaningful Christmas

Nathan E. Jones



Nathan E. Jones

My most meaningful Christmas actually centered on a tragedy. It was 1984 and I was 11 years old. That was the Christmas when my paternal grandfather died.

When I was little, my grandparents used to make the journey from Florida up to my family's home in Tennessee every Christmas. Though we loved them, they never were really fun to have around on the holidays. The childlike joy that my two siblings and I shared had many years ago dulled for them, and so they had to eat their breakfast and set everything just right before the family could finally open their presents. I thought I'd explode waiting for them!

The one thing that was actually fun about my grandparents' visits was that my grandfather, Wally Jones, used to bring his ventriloquist dummy, Tommy, along with him and perform puppet shows. With only a sixth grade education, the man was a simple clerk by day, but on nights and weekends, Wally Jones transformed into a mighty missionary to children, and Tommy was his evangelistic instrument.

THE
"OLD
STORY"
IN A
NEW
WAY



TOMMY and WALLY

WALLACE JONES
GOSPEL VENTRILOQUIST
COME! - SEE! - HEAR!

Tommy the Dummy

Tommy was a plain old slot-jawed, pug-nosed dummy that bore a likeness to the famous dummy, Charlie McCarthy, of Edgar Bergen fame. That's because Tommy had been hand-crafted by the same artist, and so as I learned later, was very valuable. I loved to put my hand into the dummy's back and move the head up and down to make Tommy "yuk" as if laughing. A thumb switch also made Tommy's eyes move back

and forth, and an index finger lever made his mouth open and close creating a clacking of the teeth sort of sound.

I was always impressed by the accentuated facial features, lifelike eyes, and heavy makeup which allowed the dummy to be visible from way out in the audience. My little brother, not so much, because he was terrified that Tommy would spring to life and kill him. (And that's why one night I snuck into his room and propped the dummy up holding a knife. Mike's scream could be heard for miles!).

My dad wasn't too fond of the dummy either, having had to grow up in youth outreaches where every other kid joked that he was the "dummy's brother."

The best part about Tommy wasn't how he operated or that he wore these cute little suits, but that the dummy could come to life. In my grandfather's hands, like a switch being thrown, Tommy's wonderful personality manifested. He was a hilarious little guy, always ready with a wisecrack followed by a Bible verse. Likewise, Wally, normally a dour and critical man, came to life as well, finally exhibiting a warm and friendly side that few witnessed in everyday life.

Tommy the Entertainer

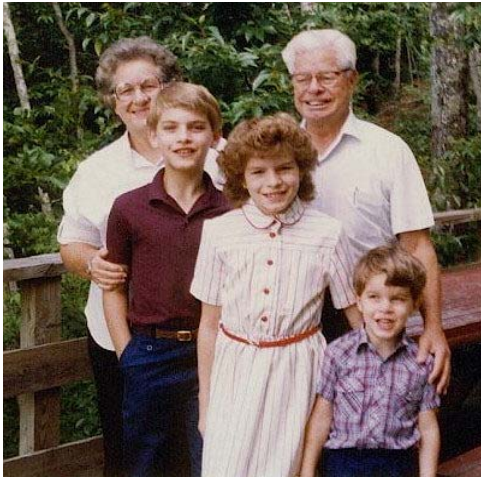
One of the many children my grandfather led to the Lord, Doug Nearpass, years later described one of Wally and Tommy's children's outreaches:

It was a Friday night in the mid-60s . . . at a little church in East Rutherford, New Jersey. On Friday nights they crammed them in for Happy Hour. Kids wriggled in the pews. They sang songs, played games, and had Bible quizzes. Then came the evening's highlight. This particular night it was Wally Jones and Tommy.

A waddling, fleece-haired gentleman, Jones was an evangelist with a wooden ventriloquist's dummy. The elders took down the pulpit so Wally could plant his stand, a platform the size of an unfolded napkin mounted on a metal tripod. Wally and Tommy wore matching blue suits. He'd tell the same bad jokes every year; you knew what he was going to say, but you just sat there waiting.

"Hey, Wally, I see Susie Smith is here tonight." "That's right, Tommy." "Yeah, and I understand she wants to be a nurse someday." "That's nice. Why does Susie want to be a nurse?" "I dunno." "Why don't you ask her, Tommy?" "I did. I asked what she'd do if I had a hole in my head." "What did Susie say?" "She said she'd stick a cork in it!"

Wally would tell a few more gags. Then he'd pick out a kid in the audience for his segue: "Billy says he's a Christian. You know, Tommy, I'm a Christian, too." "Oh yeah?" "Yeah, well I wasn't always..." And then came his testimony.¹



Nathan is pictured above with his grandparents and his younger sister and brother.

Tommy the Evangelist

Through his “conversations” with Tommy, Wally shared how he grew up in a home where his father expected him to distill a pint of liquor in the bathtub distillery every night and have it ready before he came home from work. He revealed that at the tender age of 12, his father was blown up in a factory accident, and so he had to drop out of school and become the family provider. Eventually, he took up the trumpet and became a performer, partying in the Big Band lifestyle. Finally, he talked about how spiritually empty he was until a man finally led him to the Lord.

Nearpass remembers Wally also saying:

“You know, Tommy, I knew the memory verses, I knew the Bible stories, but you know, even as a young boy, I knew that if I died in my sleep I wouldn’t go to heaven because I hadn’t trusted the Lord as my Savior. I hadn’t made that choice. I knew everything, but I didn’t trust Him in my heart. I wanted to settle that right then and there, so I trusted the Lord as my Savior.”²

Wally’s testimony was so “haunting” that Nearpass remembers that he couldn’t shake Tommy’s little face that night:

“I remember lying in bed and thinking, ‘I’ve got to do this tonight.’ I got out of bed, and I knelt down in front of the window and prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, I want to go to heaven. Please come into my heart and forgive my sins.’”³

Doug Nearpass was so smitten by Wally and Tommy’s outreach that he devoted his own life to evangelistic ventriloquism. He and his own dummy, DigDag, went on to create a Saturday morning kids’ show that led thousands more children to Jesus Christ.

Tommy the Legacy

On the day after Christmas in 1984, Wally mentioned after dinner that he felt sort of funny and went into the bathroom. There he suffered a heart attack so massive the organ actually ripped. At age 74, Wally went home to his Savior.

When my grandmother passed as well some 25 years later, I inherited Tommy, along with a chest of all his little suits and shoes. I never could make him come back to “life” again. Tommy apparently had died the same day Wally did.

Being so old and fragile, I sold Tommy to a dummy museum in New York City. There, the curator assures me, Tommy stands on display surrounded by posters from various evangelistic meetings. Thousands of children who are all grown up now were led to the Lord by Wally and Tommy, and even to this day, the duo continue their witness for Christ from that little museum.

What should have been a tragedy — the loss of my grandfather — eventually became a triumph for the Gospel. Besides the thousands Wally led to the Lord, thousands more were led by Doug Nearpass, and then his student, Todd Liebenow.⁴ And, those thousands shared the Gospel with tens of thousands more.

I learned that Christmas how important it is that we as Christians continue to forge our own link in the evangelistic chain that started with Jesus Christ and will end when the final person is saved before the Rapture (2 Peter 3:9). My grandfather had inspired me to become an evangelist. ✚

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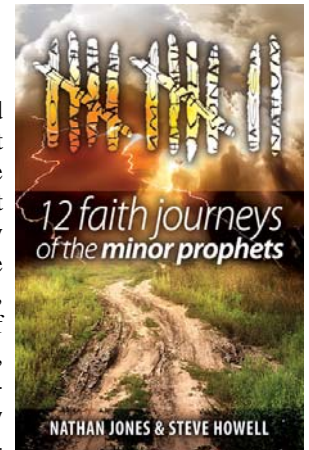
- 1) Jay Kirk, “Preachin’ Puppets,” *Chicago Reader*, (May 31, 2001), www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/preachin-puppets/Content?oid=905577.
 - 2) Ibid.
 - 3) Ibid.
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An Outstanding Book by Nathan Jones

Dr. Reagan says he has read every book he can find about the Minor Prophets — ever since he discovered them when he was about 30 years old. “I was at church every time the doors were open from the time I was born until the age of 30, and I never heard any mention of the Minor Prophets.” He added, “When I started reading and studying them, I was amazed at how relevant they were to our lives today. I fell in love with them and began to preach their timely messages. When Nathan presented me his manuscript for his *Minor Prophets* book, I immediately devoured it, and I concluded that it was, without a doubt, the best book I had ever read about these amazing prophets.”

The same sort of accolades have been coming from people all over the nation — both ministers and lay people. Nathan and his co-writer, Steve Howell, have produced an easy-to-read and down-to-earth study of the Minor Prophets that brings their messages home to us today.

The book runs 314 pages and sells for \$20, including the cost of shipping. ✚



A Christmas Quiz

How much of what you know about the Nativity is based on Scripture?

The Bible says (True or False):

- 1) Joseph and Mary traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem.
- 2) When Joseph and Mary traveled, Mary rode on a donkey.
- 3) The innkeeper told Joseph there was no room in the inn.
- 4) Jesus was born on the same night Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem.
- 5) Mary wrapped her son in cloths and laid Him in a manger.
- 6) Straw filled the manger in which Jesus was laid.
- 7) Jesus was born on a cold winter's night.
- 8) Sheep stood next to the manger.
- 9) The stable was built of wood.
- 10) Joseph and Mary named Jesus the night He was born.
- 11) Some of the animals woke the baby Jesus, but He didn't cry.
- 12) The shepherds were terrified when an angel of the Lord appeared to them, announcing Christ's birth.
- 13) The shepherds, then the Magi, came to the manger.
- 14) The shepherds and the Magi saw His star.
- 15) The Magi were from the East.
- 16) King Herod sent the Magi to Bethlehem.
- 17) The Magi arrived on camels.
- 18) Three Magi visited Bethlehem.
- 19) The Magi came to a house where the Child and mother were.
- 20) After having found the Child, the Magi were warned not to go back the Herod.

Answers:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1) <i>True.</i> Luke 2:4. | not Scripture. | saw the star (Matthew 2:2 & 10), there is no scriptural evidence the shepherds did. |
| 2) <i>False.</i> Although it's possible Mary rode a donkey because of her condition, this is not stated in the Scriptures. | 8) <i>False.</i> No Nativity set seems complete without a few sheep facing the manger. But the biblical account mentions only flocks in nearby fields (Luke 2:8). | 15) <i>True.</i> Matthew 2:1. |
| 3) <i>False.</i> Many Christmas pageants include a scene where Joseph has a door slammed rudely in his face. However, an innkeeper isn't actually mentioned in Scripture. See Luke 2:7. | 9) <i>False.</i> No stable is mentioned in either Matthew or Luke. It could have been a cave. | 16) <i>True.</i> Matthew 2:8. |
| 4) <i>False.</i> We often picture Mary and Joseph barely making it to Bethlehem before Jesus was born. But the Scriptures simply state: "While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born" (Luke 2:6). | 10) <i>False.</i> He was given the name by an angel before conception (Luke 1:31), and it was publicly confirmed at His circumcision (Luke 2:21). | 17) <i>False.</i> Although it's likely they used camels for transportation, they are not mentioned in the Bible. |
| 5) <i>True.</i> Luke 2:7. | 11) <i>False.</i> This is found in Martin Luther's song, "Away in a Manger," not Scripture. | 18) <i>False.</i> When you sing, "The First Noel" or "We Three Kings," remember we are not told how many Magi traveled to Bethlehem. Matthew 2:11 says gifts of gold, incense and myrrh were presented to the baby Jesus, but we can't assume that three gifts mean three givers. |
| 6) <i>False.</i> The Scriptures don't specify straw. | 12) <i>True.</i> Luke 2:9. | 19) <i>True.</i> Not only are we told the Magi came to a "house," we also find Joseph's presence isn't mentioned (Matthew 2:11). |
| 7) <i>False.</i> You'll find this in the opening stanza of "The First Noel," | 13) <i>False.</i> Nativity scenes have several Magi at the manger, but your Bible does not. See Luke 2:15-18. | 20) <i>True.</i> Matthew 2:12. |
| | 14) <i>False.</i> Although we're told the Magi | |

This quiz first appeared in the *Christian Herald* magazine in the November-December issue of 1989. It was written by Tom Rakow, who at the time was pastor of a church in Silver Lake, Minnesota. It has since been reprinted in Pastor Rakow's book, *Copy Me! Bible Quizzes*, which can be purchased at www.rockdove.com. ❖

Acting on Faith

Moving Mountains

Dr. David R. Reagan

He [Jesus] said to them . . . “truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you” (Matthew 17:20).

The first book I wrote was titled, *Trusting God: Learning to Walk by Faith*. It was published in 1987, seven years after I had established Lamb & Lion Ministries. That book is now in its third edition.

The book was based on my personal experience of learning to live by faith. All my life I had heard sermons about faith, and I had personally preached and taught about faith. But after I established Lamb & Lion Ministries, I quickly discovered it is one thing to talk about faith and entirely a different thing to live by faith.

My first few years of living by faith were downright scary. Where was my income going to come from? How was I going to pay the rent on the duplex where my family lived? How was I going to afford an office and utilities, much less the equipment or printing or travel expenses the ministry would require?

Many times the Lord took me right down to my last dollar before He met my needs. It was breathtaking, but one good thing is that it kept me on my knees praying without ceasing.

current car on a new one and setting up monthly payments.” He replied, “This is supposed to be a faith ministry. Let’s just join hands around the table and pray. Let’s give God the first opportunity to meet our need.” And so we prayed.

A couple of weeks later, I announced the need in our monthly newsletter. A few days later a lady in Oklahoma City called and asked what kind of vehicle the ministry needed. I told her a van that would enable us to haul our materials to meetings. She asked how much a van would cost. I told her around \$15,000 (this was 1983). She asked if that included tax, title, and license. I said it did not. “How much do you think the total would be?” she asked. I told her I had no idea. She then said, “Well, it shouldn’t come to more than \$17,000, so I will put a check in the mail today for that amount.” I was stunned.

I could recount story after story like that one of God intervening in response to prayer to meet the needs of this ministry. And as He did so, I learned to trust Him and turn to Him first, and then sit back and watch in wonder as He would meet my need — usually in a way I did not expect and never could have imagined.

Faith doesn’t happen overnight. It grows as you learn to lean on the Lord.

A Church’s Mountain

I am a member of a church in McKinney, Texas (a suburb of Dallas) called the Brookhaven Church. The pastor, Glenn Meredith, is a man of vision and faith. He has been the pastor for 36 years. When he had been with the church for 31 years, he felt called of the Lord to move it from north Dallas to a location 25 miles north in the midst of the cities of Frisco and McKinney,



The Brookhaven Church mountain.

Over the years, the fears subsided as I learned to trust the Lord. I remember in particular one Board meeting where I told the ministry’s trustees that my auto had become worthless, and I needed their permission to get a replacement. One of the trustees asked how I planned to do that, and I said, “By trading in the

which is the fastest growing area in the state.

After the move, the church began meeting in a strip shopping center while trying to raise sufficient funds to construct a new building. In the process, the Lord blessed the congregation with a prime piece of real estate with 650 feet of exposure on one

of the main boulevards.

But there was a problem with the site. It had a mountain of dirt at one end that would have to be removed. This enormous pile of dirt was not a natural mound. It was dirt that had been dumped there for years by developers before the area was incorporated into any city.

The mound consisted of 13,000 cubit yards of dirt — and that is a LOT of dirt! A cubit yard of dirt weighs about 2,000 pounds — almost a ton. The average pickup truck will hold about a ton. It would take one laborer a full day to load a pickup truck using a hand shovel, then drive to the unloading point and shovel out the dirt.

If a worker were to do one load a day for seven days a week, 365 days a year, it would take him 35 years to move all the dirt! If he took off weekends, holidays and vacation days, it would take him 52 years. Again, that's a lot of dirt!

The church got an estimate for having the dirt removed, and it came to \$175,000!



A Call to Prayer

Pastor Meredith asked the congregation to start praying, and we did. One Sunday after the morning service, I drove to the site, got out of my car, walked to the foot of the mound and read Matthew 17:20 aloud. Then I prayed the Lord would move the mountain.

A sign was placed at the site that read, "Free Dirt." There was little response. A year later the mountain was still there. Finally, in August 2017, we were notified by the construction company that was putting up our new building that the mound had to be gone within two weeks. We increased our prayers. Then, with one week to go, two developers called and said they wanted the dirt. They were told, "first come, first served."

Both showed up at the same time with high powered excavators. They started at each end of the mound and worked toward each other, and in one week's time they had hauled off almost 1,000 loads using huge semi-trailer trucks!

And the congregation said, "WOW!" And they added, "PRAISE THE LORD." Pastor Meredith explained that "obstacles are opportunities for God to show Himself strong in our behalf, bringing glory to Himself."

Personal Mountains

Sooner or later all of us face mountains in our lives. It may be a midnight phone call from the police telling you they have one of your children in custody. Or a doctor looks you in the eye and says, "I am so sorry to have to tell you that it's cancer." It could be a business failure or the loss of a job. Perhaps it is a stock market crash or a spouse who says, "I no longer love you."

How are you prepared to respond? Using your money? Your

education? Your contacts? Your ingenuity? Will God be your last thought when all else fails? Or will you turn to Him first with childlike faith?

God is a gentleman. He is also very patient. If you decide to personally handle your mountain, He will let you. He is not going to force His will upon you.

One of the most common questions Jesus asked people was, "What do you want me to do for you?" He asked that of a blind man who called out to Him as He was walking by. Jesus knew the man was blind, but Jesus wanted him to reach out in faith. The blind man responded, "Lord, I want to regain my sight!"

He could have asked for a dog or a companion to guide him, but no, he cried out for Jesus to heal his sight. Jesus responded, "Your faith has made you well." And the Scriptures say that the man "immediately regained his sight, and began following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God" (Luke 18:35-43).

I urge you to start trusting God with the mountains in your life. He is more than willing to help you, but He is waiting for you to humble yourself and reach out to Him in faith. Isaiah 26:4 says, "Trust in the LORD forever, for in God the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock."

I am reminded of the words of the great gospel song, "Stand Still" —

When the storm around you rages,
And you're tossed to and fro,
When you're faced with life's decisions,
Not sure which way to go,
Stand still and let God move.

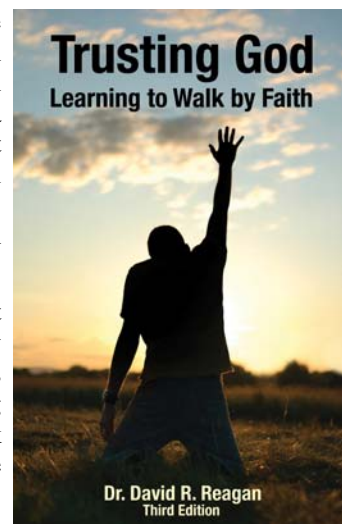
Standing still is hard to do.
When you feel you have reached the end,
He'll make a way for you.
Stand still and let God move. ✚

A Book for Those Struggling to Live by Faith

This is the story of the founding of Lamb & Lion Ministries and the first seven years when Dr. Reagan had a wrestling match with God. It uses anecdotal stories to tell how the struggle taught Dr. Reagan how to walk by faith and trust God with every step.

Dr. Reagan takes a look at the basic issues of everyday Christian living and identifies the key principles for walking by faith. It is a moving book that will have you laughing one moment and crying the next.

Third edition. 333 pages. \$20, including the cost of shipping. ✚



The Pope Gets It Wrong Again!

Dr. David R. Reagan

Ever since he was elected in 2013, Pope Francis has kept the Vatican working overtime calling press conferences to explain that he doesn't really mean what he says.



Pope Francis

Here are just a few examples of his off-the-wall statements:

- “I would be willing to baptize aliens if they came to the Vatican. Who are we to close doors to anyone — even Martians?” (May 2014).
- “When we read about creation in Genesis, we run the risk of imagining God was a magician, with a magic wand, able to do everything. But that is not so” (October 2014).
- “It is not true that to be a good Catholic, you have to be like rabbits” (January 2015).
- “If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?” (July 2013). And on another occasion, speaking to a gay Catholic: “God made you that way and your sexuality does not matter” (May 2018).
- “The ‘Big Bang’ that today is considered to be the origin of the world, does not contradict the creative intervention of God. On the contrary, it requires it” (October 2014).
- When a conference of bishops in October 2014 rejected proposed wording that would soften the Church’s stance toward homosexuality and divorce, the Pope declared that “God is not afraid of new things,” and he called on the church to adapt to “changing conditions in society.”
- “They [unbelievers] are not punished . . . those who do not repent and cannot be forgiven disappear. A hell doesn’t exist, the disappearance of sinning souls exists” (March 2018).

The Pope’s Newest Revelation

The Pope’s latest unbiblical declaration occurred in August of this year (2018) when he declared that the death penalty is wrong in all cases. Unlike the above off-the-cuff remarks to reporters, this pronouncement was an official declaration that has resulted in a change in the Catholic catechism.

Until now the Catholic Church has always recognized capital punishment as a just penalty for severe crimes, particularly murder. In 1997, Pope John Paul II narrowed the standards to approve the death penalty if it is “the only practical way” to defend life.

Pope Francis’ new rule outlaws the death penalty totally. In announcing the decision, he claimed that capital punishment is “inadmissible” because it constitutes an attack on the “dignity of man.”

As usual, the Pope did not present any scriptural basis for his decision, although a year earlier he had made the comment that in his opinion, “the death penalty is contrary to the Gospel.”

The Biblical View

The fact of the matter is that the Pope’s decision is thoroughly unbiblical. The sad thing is that most professing Christians are completely unaware of this.

Here’s the point. After the Noahic flood, God made a covenant with Noah that is recorded in Genesis 9:1-17. This is the covenant in which God promised that He would never again destroy the earth with water, and He gave the rainbow as a symbol of that promise. This was declared to be an “everlasting covenant” (Genesis 9:16).



There were other provisions of this very important covenant that are often overlooked:

- 1) Mankind was ordered to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Genesis 9:1 & 7).
- 2) All the animals of the earth were given an instinctive fear of humans (Genesis 9:2).
- 3) Mankind was given permission henceforth to eat animals as food (the implication being that people were vegetarians prior to this time — Genesis 9:3).
- 4) God commanded the death penalty for murder: “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man” (Genesis 9:6).

People often respond to this covenant by saying, “But that’s a covenant God made with the Jewish people, and it is no longer valid today during the Church Age.” Not so! The Jewish people did not even exist when God made this covenant. The Jewish people are the descendants of Abraham through his son Isaac, and Isaac was not born until 400 years after the flood.

The Noahic Covenant was a covenant with all Mankind, and, again, it was declared by God to be an “everlasting covenant” (Genesis 9:16).

Subsequent Biblical Confirmations

The death penalty for murder was reaffirmed in the Mosaic Covenant that God made with Israel (Leviticus 24:17 and Numbers 35:30). And it was reconfirmed in the New Testament in Romans 13:1-7 where the Apostle Paul wrote in detail about civil government and the necessity of Christians to be in subjection to their governments. In verse 4, he pointed out that God has given civil government the right to “bear the sword” as “an avenger” of God “who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.”

I think it is also important to note that the early Church recognized the continuing validity of the Noahic Covenant. When the leaders of the Church were faced with the issue of whether or not Gentile believers should be required to be circumcised, they decided against it, but they did decide that they were subject to the Noahic Covenant, and they, therefore, instructed them to refrain from eating blood (Acts 15:6-29).

So, Pope Francis has elevated his personal opinion above God’s Word. And the Bible presents grave warnings against those who do so (Revelation 22:18-19):

18) I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book;

19) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

We are living in a prophesied time of gross apostasy when the Church (both Catholic and Protestant) desires to be accepted by the world, despite what the Word of God says. ✚

How Does Catholicism Differ From Biblical Christianity?

Dr. Reagan is on the advisory board of a wonderful ministry in Southlake, Texas called “Proclaiming the Gospel.” The ministry’s founder and senior evangelist is Mike Gendron.

For over 34 years, Evangelist Mike Gendron was a devout Roman Catholic and a strong defender of the “one true church.” He was taught from a very early age to trust and rely on the church, its priests, the sacraments and his own good works for salvation.

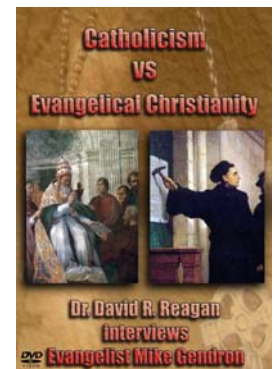
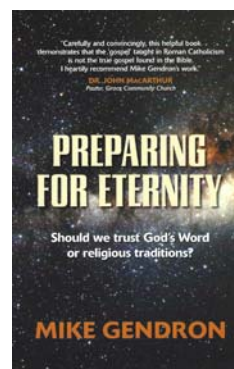
However in 1981 while attending an evangelical seminar, he realized the Bible is the supreme authority for knowing truth. His new excitement and hunger for the inspired Word of God led him to help organize a Bible study at a Catholic Church in Dallas.

Mike soon realized that many of the teachings and traditions of the Catholic religion were not found in the Bible. After more study he discovered the Roman Catholic plan of salvation was diametrically opposed to the Gospel of grace revealed in the Bible. This led to a crisis of faith. Should he trust Christ and His Word or the teachings and traditions of his religion? He knew he could not believe both. God granted him repentance and he exchanged his religion for a relationship with his all-sufficient Savior.

Mike left the Catholic Church in 1985 for a church where the true Gospel is proclaimed and Scripture is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. In 1988, he left a successful career in corporate management to study at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Four years later, during his last semester at DTS, Mike and his wife Jane's love for Catholics inspired them to begin a ministry that would point Catholics to the Lord Jesus Christ as their all sufficient Savior. Their hearts are now burdened for those who may be where they were for most of their life — eternally condemned and not even aware of it.

We offer two resources to help you understand the difference between Catholicism and Biblical Christianity. One is a book by Mike. The other is a video interview of Mike that Dr. Reagan produced. Each sell for \$20, including the cost of mailing. Or, you can purchase both for \$30, including the cost of mailing. If you want both, ask for offer # 672. ✚



A Song by Larry Norman —

The Outlaw

Some say He was an **outlaw**, that He roamed
 across the land
 With a band of unschooled ruffians and few old
 fishermen
 No one knew just where He came from, or ex-
 actly what He'd done
 But they said it must be something bad that kept
 Him on the run

Some say He was a **poet**, that He'd stand upon
 the hill
 That His voice could calm an angry crowd and
 make the waves stand still
 That He spoke in many parables that few could
 understand
 But the people sat for hours just to listen to this
 man



Food for Thought

Some say a **politician** who spoke of being free
 He was followed by the masses on the shores of Galilee
 He spoke out against corruption and He bowed to no decree
 And they feared His strength and power so they nailed Him to a
 tree

Some say he was a **sorcerer**, a man of mystery
 He could walk upon the water, He could make a blind man see
 That He conjured wine at weddings and did tricks with fish and
 bread
 That He talked of being born again and raised people from the
 dead

Some say He was **the Son of God**, a man above all men
 That He came to be a servant and to set us free from sin
 And that's who I believe He is, cause that's what I believe
 And I think we should get ready cause it's time for us to leave

John 10:19-21

19) A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words [spoken by Jesus].

20) Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?"

21) Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?"

An Observation by Malcolm Muggeridge —

[In today's times] "it is extremely improbable that Jesus would have been permitted to be born at all.

Mary's pregnancy, in poor circumstances, and with the father unknown, would have been an obvious case for an abortion; and her talk of having conceived as a result of the intervention of the Holy Ghost would have pointed to the need for psychiatric treatment, and made the case for terminating her pregnancy even stronger.

Thus, our generation, needing a Savior more, perhaps than any that has ever existed, would be too humane to allow one to be born."

A Poem by B. J. Hoff —

THE FIRST TIME HE CAME,
 He came gently on a starlit night,
 in a silent hush, with no fanfare . . .

BUT WHEN HE COMES AGAIN,
 The earth will shake,
 the stars will fall,
 as the trumpets of heaven
 announce His presence . . .

THE FIRST TIME HE CAME,
 He was ignored and scorned,
 despised and rejected and tortured . . .

BUT WHEN HE COMES AGAIN,
 All nations will gather to kneel
 before Him, declaring His glory
 and singing His praise.

THE FIRST TIME HE CAME,
 He hung on a rugged cross in shame,
 betrayed by His own, to die as a thief . . .

BUT WHEN HE RETURNS,
 He will sit on His throne
 as the Universe shouts in triumphant joy . . .
 and crowns Him everlasting King of kings
 and Lord of lords . . .

A Christmas Poem —

Mary had the little Lamb
 Who lived before His birth;
 Self-existent Son of God
 From heaven He came to earth.

Mary had the little Lamb;
 See Him in yonder stall –
 Virgin-born Son of God,
 To save man from the Fall.

Mary had the little Lamb,
 Obedient Son of God,
 Everywhere the Father led,
 His feet were sure to trod.

Mary had the little Lamb,
 Men placed Him in the grave
 Thinking they were done with Him;
 To death He was no slave!

Mary had the little Lamb,
 Ascended now is He;
 All work on earth is ended,
 Our Advocate to be.

Mary had the little Lamb,
 Mystery to behold!
 From the Lamb of Calvary
 A Lion will unfold.

When the Day Star comes again,
 Of this be very sure:
 It won't be the Lamb-like silence,
 But with the Lion's roar.

[The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry] ✚



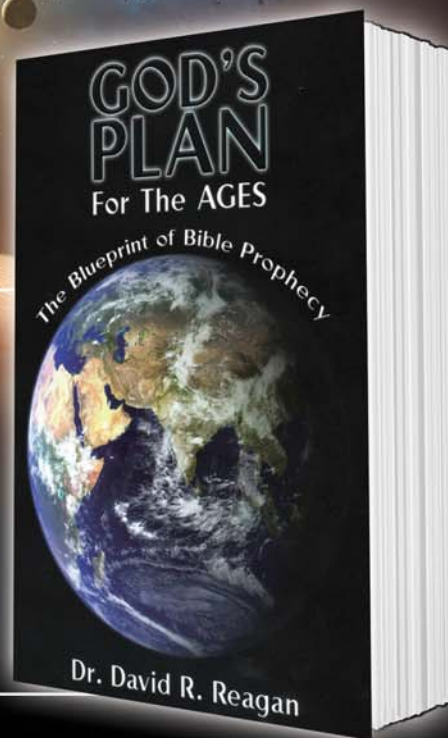
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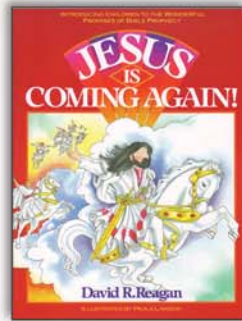
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Honored Guest

Dr. David R. Reagan

We were recently honored and blessed to have as our special guest one of the pioneers in Jewish evangelism, Dr. Tom McCall. He told about how he, a Gentile, became interested in Jewish evangelism, resulting in his becoming a representative of the American Board of Missions to the Jews for more than 25 years.

He also shared about his partnership with Zola Levitt in writing books about Bible prophecy. He concluded the interview by sharing his expert opinion about Replacement Theology and Dual Covenant Theology. The program will most likely be broadcast in November.



Dr. Reagan with Dr. Tom McCall

Television Broadcast Schedules

National Networks:

Daystar — Wed. 6:00pm CT, DirecTV 369, Dish 263, cable, broadcast stations, satellites and web streaming (daystar.com).

Word — Tues. 12:30pm CT, DirecTV 373, Cable, AT&T U-verse, cable, satellites and web streaming (thewordnetwork.org).

Angel One — Mon. 8:00am CT, DISH 262 (www.angelone.tv).

CTN — Wed. & Fri. 12:30pm CT, DirecTV 376, Dish 267 and web streaming (ctnonline.com).

CTVN — Sun. 8pm CT. The network has 44 full-power stations and 57 low-power affiliate stations. Glorystar satellite service and web streaming (www.ctvn.org).

GEB — Sat. 5:00pm CT, DirecTV 363 and web streaming (gebamerica.com).

GodTV — Thurs. 8:30am CT, DirecTV 365 and web streaming (god.tv).

NRB — Sun. 4:00pm CT, DirecTV 378 and web streaming (nrbtv.org).

TCT — Sun. 7:30pm CT, DirecTV 377, ten broadcast stations in the Midwest, and web streaming (tct.tv).

Upliftv — Mon. & Fri. 9:30am CT, DirecTV 379 (upliftv.com).

WHT — Sat. 7:00pm CT, DirecTV 367 and web streaming (lesea.com/wht).

Regional Networks & Area Stations:

Arkansas:

VTN (The Victory Television Network) — Covering the state of Arkansas., Tues. 10:30am CT, Sat. at 2:30pm, and Sun. at 10:00pm (vtntv.com).

Florida:

WTOG-TV — Tampa and St. Petersburg, FL, Sun. 8:30am ET, channel 44 (cwtampa.cbslocal.com).

Georgia:

WATC — Atlanta, GA, Sun. 8:30am ET, channel 57 (http://wac.tv).

Kentucky

WBNA — Louisville, KY, Sun. 8:30am ET, channel 21 (www.wbna21.com).

Louisiana

FVN — Southern Louisiana broadcast stations and cable, Sun. 12:30am CT, Mon. 8:30am, and Wed. 7:00pm, (familyvisiontv.com).

Missouri

KMCI — Kansas City, Sun. 7:30am, CT, channel 38 (www.kshb.com/38-the-spot).

KFJX — Joplin, MO, Sun. 7:30am, CT, channel 14 (fox14tv.com).

North Carolina

WCCB — Charlotte, NC, Sun. 7:00am ET, channel 18 (ccbcharlotte.com).

Tennessee

WNAB — Nashville, TN, Sun. 7:00am CT, channel 58 (http://cw58.tv).

Texas

CFNT — Wichita Falls, TX broadcast station, Fri. 3:00pm CT (cfnt.org).

KCEN — Waco & Temple, TX broadcast station, Sun. 6:30am CT, channel 9 (kcentv.com).

KDAF — Dallas-Ft. Worth. TX area broadcast station, Sun. 8:00am CT, channel 33 (cw33.com).

KSCE — El Paso, TX broadcast station, Sun. 10:30am MT, DirecTV & DISH Local 38, AT&T U-verse 38, (ksctv.com).

KUBE — Houston, TX, Sun. 8am CT, channel 57, Comcast cable 53, DirecTV & DISH local 57 (http://kubetv.com).

Internet Networks:

Our programs are available on demand on these websites:

- HisChannel** — hischannel.com
- YouTube** — youtube.com/user/ChristinProphecy
- GodTube** — godtube.com
- Truli** — truli.com
- Vimeo** — vimeo.com
- DailyMotion** — dailymotion.com/us
- Roku** — roku.com
- Lamb & Lion** — lamblion.com

Ministry News

Schedule of Activities —

November:

Vic Batista & Nathan Jones radio program in Miami, FL at 5:30pm ET on 102.3 FM. Also streamed on Facebook & Twitter (7,14,21,28).

Oakwood Christian Church in Enid, OK [Reagan] (4).

Display at the International Conference on Missions in Cincinnati, OH [Nunnelley] (15-18).

Board Meeting of Hands of Luke Ministries in Dallas, TX [Reagan] (17).

December:

Lamb & Lion Board of Trustees Annual Retreat in Allen, TX [entire staff] (Nov. 30 - Dec. 1).

Vic Batista & Nathan Jones radio program (5,12,19,26).

Pre-Trib Annual Conference in Dallas, TX [Reagan & Jones] (3-5).

January 2019:

Vic Batista & Nathan Jones radio program (9,16,23,30).

Bible Prophecy Conference at Christ Community Church in El Centro, CA [Reagan] (11-13).

According to Prophecy Regional Conference at Love and Unity Christian Fellowship in Compton, CA [Reagan] (20-21).

First Baptist Church in Canton, TX (evening) [Reagan] (27).

2019 Calendar —



The Lamb & Lion Holy Land calendar for 2019 is ready for distribution. The calendar features 14 full color photos of scenes in Israel (counting the front and back covers). It sell for \$10, including the cost of shipping.

Google & Alexa —

Google Home and Alexa Echo devices let you instantly connect to Google and Alexa — cloud-based services — to play music, control your smart home, get weather updates, information, and more, using just your voice. Now you can listen to “Christ in Prophecy” on your Google and Alexa-enabled smart devices!

Just ask, “Alexa (or Google), play the Christ in Prophecy podcast” and the latest episode will automatically cue up and play. Other Lamb & Lion podcasts and radio interviews will also be available.

Missions —

Please pray for the following Christian leaders and their ministries which we support financially:

1) Donald Dolmus in Nicaragua. His nation is caught up in a civil war that is growing more vicious each day. Donald and his family live right in the midst of the struggle, with street barricades only a couple of blocks from their home.

2) John Ishmael in India. He holds Bible prophecy conferences for pastors, he translates and publishes our materials in Telugu and he publishes a condensed version of our *Lamplighter* magazine. He is experiencing increasing persecution due to a rising tide of Hindu violence.

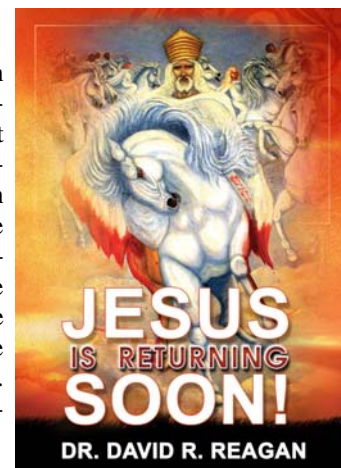
3) Nazir Gill in Pakistan. He operates continually under a threat of death from Muslims. He translates and publishes our materials in Urdu, and he holds Bible prophecy conferences for pastors all over the nation.

4) Standfast Oyinna in Nigeria. He is providing food, clothing, housing and job training for almost 300 Christian refugees who have fled from Muslim violence. Boko Haram, now affiliated with ISIS, is a daily threat to him and his people.



Our Newest Video —

We have been receiving an overwhelmingly positive response to Dr. Reagan’s newest video program, “Jesus is Returning Soon!” He presents an overview of the Signs of the Times, Pointing out that although we cannot know the date of the Lord’s return, we can know the season, and we are in that season. One hour. \$20, including the cost of shipping. ✚





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Our 2018 Conference Video Album Is Ready For Distribution

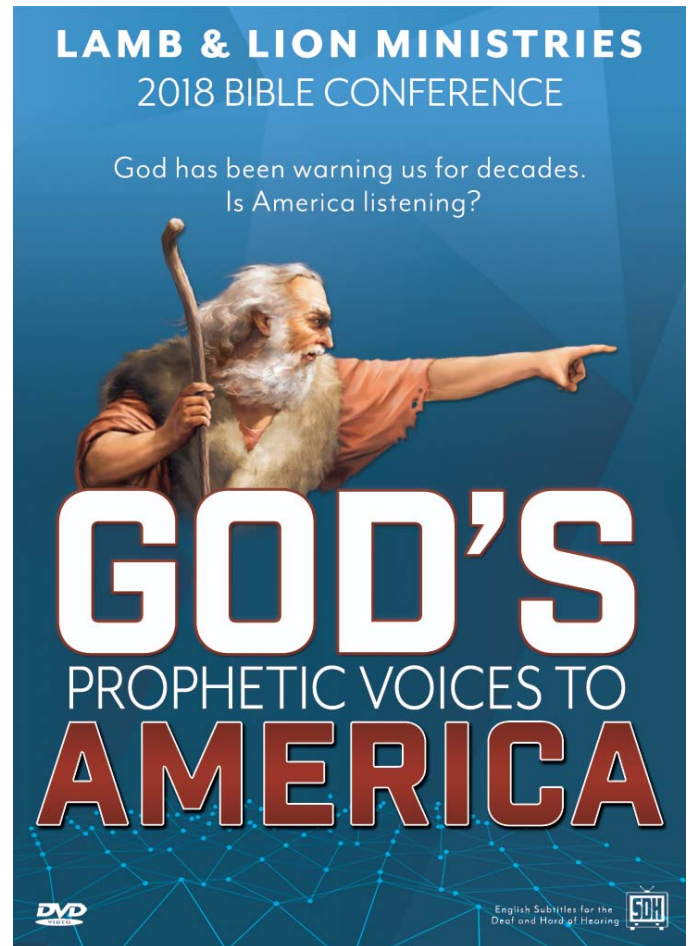
This album contains three DVD discs which feature the six presentations that were made at our 2018 annual Bible conference.

The presentations are as follows:

- Pastor Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, "The Significance of Heavenly Rewards."
- Bill Koenig, White House Correspondent and founder of World Watch Daily, "The Importance of Supporting Israel."
- Jan Markell, founder of Olive Tree Ministries in Minneapolis, Minnesota, "The Mockery of Bible Prophecy."
- Dr. David R. Reagan, founder of Lamb & Lion Ministries, "The Destiny of America."
- Pastor Billy Crone, founder of Get A Life Ministries in Las Vegas, Nevada, "The Hope for a Last Days Revival."



Billy Crone, Jan Markell and Dave Reagan



- Rabbi Jonathan Cahn of Beth Israel Congregation in Wayne, New Jersey, "A Master Biblical Blueprint for America."

The running time for the album is approximately 300 minutes. Six presentations on three DVD discs, complete with PowerPoint slides. The cost is \$25, including the cost of shipping.

You can place your order through our website at lamblion.com, or by calling 972-736-3567, Monday thru Friday, between 8am and 5pm Central Time. ✚