

EXALTING CHRIST · EQUIPPING BELIEVERS · EVANGELIZING THE WORLD

CORNERSTONE

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IN THIS ISSUE:

O Little Town of Bethlehem

The Greatest of the Great

The Long Way Home

...and more

...JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE · EPHESIANS 2:20

"...And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace..." Isaiah 9:6

Asking my co-worker years ago how she came to name her son, she caught me by surprise when she said, "I made it up." I had expected her to say that it was a combination of two names or after a relative with the same or a similar name. But when I inquired further, she said she had made it up simply because it "sounded nice."

With names in the Bible however, it is quite a different matter. In contrast, names are important and are not just given because they "sound nice." They have meanings... and significant meanings at that. In Genesis 28, when Jacob awoke from his ladder dream, he named the place Bethel... the house of God. There was meaning to that name, for sure! It would come to represent the presence and activity of the Lord in the lives of His people—the work of our Great High Priest who encourages us to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith (Heb. 9:21-22). When Enoch named Methuselah, it meant *"after death it shall be sent,"* a reference some say, to the judgment of the flood which did occur just after he died. The fact that Methuselah lived 969 years foreshadows the longsuffering and mercy of God in holding back judgment, despite the sin of mankind. One of my favorite names in Scripture is Mahershalalhashbaz (Isa. 8:1). That name means *"Hasten the booty, hasten the spoil,"* a reference of the impending defeat that Israel would receive at the hands of the Assyrians. When it comes to names in the Bible, often there is much in a name!

When it comes to the Lord also, there is much in His Name. Think of all the names given to the Lord in Scripture: The Bread of Life, The Way, the Truth, and the Life, the First and the Last, the Bright and Morning Star. On and on we can go with each name carrying a volume of spiritual insight into the Person and work of our blessed Savior. But not many Bible verses have more to say about the work of our Lord than Isaiah's prophecy of the Child who would be born and a Son who would be given. It says a lot—the Child born, a reference to His *Person*, His humanity and virgin birth; the Son given, a reference to His *purpose* in coming to give His life a ransom for many. Four names are given that declares who this Person is and what His work would entail, though many see the word "Wonderful" as a separate designation, citing Judges 13:18. But it seems however that each designation is qualified by the adjective that precedes it—thus highlighting His credentials.


First, He is the **Wonderful Counselor**. As a Counselor, He knows us by name and by need. He knows our hearts and He tests our minds. He knows how to handle our situations and circumstances, and sovereignly controls events in our lives that will ultimately work toward our good. It is for the

expressed purpose of conforming us to His image (Rom. 8:28-29). Like David with Israel, He guides us with the skillfulness of His hands (Psa. 78:72). In that work, there is none better than He, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Remember—our Savior is a Wonderful Counselor, a merciful and faithful High Priest who we can call out to in our time of need.

Not only is He a Wonderful Counselor, but He is also the **Mighty God**. He is Elohim, the powerful God—the One who created the heavens and the earth, who *"made the stars also."* He is the *"great God"* (Titus 2:13), *"the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords"* (1 Tim. 6:15). There is no one like Him, and when it comes to turning the rivers of water, He can turn it wherever He wishes (Prov. 21:1). He can save to the uttermost and as Charles Wesley put it *"His blood can make the foulest clean, His blood availed for me!"* Do not forget that our Savior is a Mighty God whose hand and arm are mighty to save.

He is also the **Everlasting Father**. This designation *"Father"* throws some people, thinking it refers to the first member of the Godhead. But it also accurately describes the Lord as the One who links the ages of time together. Harry Ironside termed it, *"The Father of Eternity,"* the Centerpiece of history and upon Whom the end of the ages have come (1 Cor. 10:11). Remember, our Savior is the Everlasting Father who will ultimately be acknowledged for who He truly is.

Finally, He is the **Prince of Peace**. He offers the peace of God to those who come to Him by faith. He gives us the perfect peace we need when our minds are stayed on Him (Isa. 26:3). As such, He speaks peace to His people and provides the peace that passes all understanding, when we turn things over to Him in prayer (Phil. 4:6-7). Remember, He is the Prince of Peace who grants that peace to the heirs of salvation.

What's in a name? Much when it comes to the Lord! Let us rejoice for His work *in us* and *with us* and *for us*...and *through us* to His glory. 



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by **Mark Kolchin**

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O *Little Town of Bethlehem* is one of the most beloved carols of the Christmas season. However, it is much more than a sentimental story that took place in Bethlehem. Bethlehem was a small quaint town, about 6 miles (10 kms) south of Jerusalem. Throughout its long and varied history, four memorable events took place in the “*little town of Bethlehem.*” These events shaped the program of God for this world and for your redemption and mine. Micah 5:2 states: “*But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting.*” Bethlehem was therefore the **natural** place and therefore the **only** place where the Savior could be born. J. Vernon McGee wrote, “The launching pad was heaven: the landing field was the stable.”

1. There was a Death at Bethlehem, Genesis 35:16-21; Genesis 48:7

The Lord told Jacob to return to Bethel, and it is here that God appears once again to him and reminds him of his name change from Jacob to Israel (Prince with God; Gen. 32:22-32). Jacob, the **natural man**, was a changed man.

Jacob and his beloved wife, Rachel, journeyed a short distance to Ephratah, where Rachel struggled with hard labor in delivering her son. While dying and struggling for breath, she gasps out his name: “*Ben-Oni, son of my sorrow,*” (Gen. 35:18) but Jacob, standing by her side cries out, “*No, his name shall be called, Benjamin, son of my right hand,*” (Gen. 35:16) Did old Jacob see and know something prophetic? Benjamin was his only son born in Israel.

What a lovely type of the Lord Jesus! He was born to die: “*The Man of Sorrows,*” who was acquainted with grief,



O LITTLE TOWN OF Bethlehem

despised, rejected, and condemned to hang from the cross. As such we can say, “*Ben Oni, Son of my sorrow.*” We rejoice this Christmas season that the One condemned to death, rose victoriously the third day, and 40 days later He ascended to glory. Psalm 110, a great Messianic psalm and the most quoted psalm in the New Testament, states, “*The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand,’ till I make Your enemies Your footstool*” (Ps. 110:1).

2. *There was a Marriage in Bethlehem, Ruth 4:10, 11, 12-17*

It was to “*Bethlehem, Judah...Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah*”, (Ruth 1:1,2) that widowed Ruth, the Moabitess, and her widowed mother-in-law Naomi returned. While gleaning in the barley fields, Ruth met her future husband and redeemer. Boaz is a lovely picture of the Lord Jesus and of grace, who was able to buy back, or redeem Ruth and make her his bride. A nearer relative than Boaz could have married Ruth, however, he refused as he did not want to ruin his inheritance (Ruth 4:6). This relative is a picture of the law and what it could not do (Rom. 8:5).

Boaz gave Ruth Bethlehem Judah to live in all the days of her life. Soon, a **marriage** took place and Ruth became his bride. From this relationship there was a son born, Obed, whose name means “*a servant.*” Obed had a son, Jesse, and Jesse had a son, David, of whom the Lord Jesus is a direct descendant (Matt. 1:5, 6).

Out of Bethlehem Judah, **the son of my right hand was born**. Out of that same town came a **redeemer**, who redeems a poor, widowed Gentile and brings her into the place of blessing. She in turns bears him a son Obed, who reminds us of another Servant, the Lord Jesus: “*Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights*” (Isa. 42:1). The “*son of my right hand*” becomes “*My servant*” who delighted in doing the Father’s will (Ps. 40: 8).

3. *There was a Well at Bethlehem, 2 Samuel 23:14-17*

Many of us sang the children’s chorus, “Only a boy named David,” and it was this David who played in the streets of Bethlehem. He had a rightful heritage since his father was Jesse and his grandfather, Obed. Both Jesse and David were born there and it was here that Samuel came seeking the Lord’s anointed to become king. Jesse paraded his seven sons before Samuel, and to each of his sons, Samuel says: “*the LORD has not chosen these.*” Samuel then asks, “Are all the young men here?” Can you not hear Jesse’s disgruntled reply, “No, there’s the youngest one, but he’s out looking after a few silly sheep?” Jesse calls his ignored and rejected son from the pasture and Samuel says, “*Arise, anoint him, for this is the one!*” (1 Sam. 16:10-13). David the shepherd becomes king!

David, the rejected, fugitive king, longed for a drink from Bethlehem’s well (2 Sam. 23:14-15). Three valiant men, hearing the plaintive cry of their rejected monarch, broke

through enemy lines risking their lives and presented to their king precious water from Bethlehem’s well. David, realizing what these valiant men did, would not drink it, rather he poured it out as a drink offering to the Lord (2 Sam. 23:17). This precious water of Bethlehem poured out by David, reminds us of our heavenly David, the Lord Jesus who “*poured out His soul unto death*” (Isa. 53:12), so that we might have living water to satisfy the longings of our hearts and souls (John 7:37). This made it an imperative that Jesus should be born in Bethlehem!


4. *There was a Birth at Bethlehem, Luke 2:8-12*

“How silently, how silently the wondrous Gift is given” speaks volumes as to what happened on that night so long ago. Bethlehem is uniquely called, “*the city of David*” and it was in Bethlehem that David’s greater Son, Jesus, would be born.

Nazareth was a dirty, and despised town, but it was here where the angel spoke to Mary, “*And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob; and of His kingdom there shall be no end*” (Luke 1:31-33). The One who was “*despised and rejected by men*” (Isa. 53:3), was born in lowly Bethlehem, and one day soon He will ultimately become the true King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Someone has expressed it so well, “The lowly One of Ephrathah is the Lofty One of eternity.”

As previously stated, “Bethlehem was therefore the natural place and therefore the only place where the Savior could be born.” History and destiny were made here.

Bethlehem is a challenge to every heart! What you do with this Savior—the Savior who was born in Bethlehem—will determine your eternity whether it will be heaven or hell! The God of eternity touched this world in the right place, at the right time, and strangely, it was in the little town of Bethlehem. He is the Son of God’s right hand, the Redeemer for Israel and for a lost world. He is the Satisfier for the thirsty soul and so rightly, “*the Bread of Life*” (John 6:35), was born in Bethlehem, “*the house of Bread.*”

During this Christmas season as believers in the Lord Jesus, let us join and sing, “O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord” and “The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.” 



Jim and his wife Heather make their home in Barrie, Ontario (Canada) where they fellowship at Northside Bible Chapel. Commended to the Lord’s work, Jim is a frequent conference speaker in Canada and the US.

by **Jim Comte**

GREATEST THAN THE GREATEST

Many will remember the famous prize fighter Muhammed Ali, and his larger than life persona. We mainly recall his continual onslaught of statements claiming to be the greatest. There is something in our culture that enthrones greatness, yet most people have widely varying definitions as to what greatness is, if they can even define it at all.

When we consider local gatherings of Christians who meet in the Name of the Lord Jesus, we may not typically see the numbers of people or the size of the assets that some other religious organizations flaunt. To anyone who is uninformed or perhaps unimpressed with what the New Testament church truly is, simple assemblies of Christians may seem inferior by comparison.

We may also find ourselves giving our own assembly a “user review” type of rating based on what is visible from our vantage point. These ratings could be based on things such as the building, the programs, the committees, the quality of preaching, what we think of the elders, the size of the congregation, etc. These things have their place, but they are not true measures of a local church’s value in our Lord’s eyes.

And since it is His church which He has purchased with His own blood, perhaps we should mature to the point that what matters to Him matters more than what matters to us.

Here are three Biblical examples of greatness to think about, which may be helpful if we need to realign our own values and priorities from time to time.

The Great Temple (2 Chron. 2:1-5)

The temple which Solomon built over a seven-year period of his reign was famous for its size and beauty. According to the biblical record, it took 70,000 people to carry materials for it, 80,000 masons to carve and lay the stonework, and 3,600 foremen to oversee the work. The final structure was approximately the size of a modern 10,000-seat indoor sports arena. It was so great; the Queen of Sheba was awestruck by its size and beauty (2 Chron. 9:3-6). Was it the greatest gathering center?

The Great Preacher (Jon. 3:1-6)

The account of Jonah is usually used as a warning about disobedience. A parallel part of the account is his incredible effectiveness as a preacher, which should not be overlooked.

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When he finally obeyed God's command to preach repentance to the city of Nineveh, the results were astounding. Here was a city which took three days to walk across, with an estimated population of 600,000 people at that time. In the short time of Jonah's preaching we read that the entire city repented, from the lowest to the highest-class citizens (Jon. 3:5). We have all heard some powerful preachers in our lifetime, but would any of them compare to Jonah? Was he the greatest preacher?

The Great Ruler (Eccl. 2:4-10)

As monarchs go, throughout history there are few that can compare to Solomon. His wisdom was legendary, and the inventory of his wealth as described in Ecclesiastes 2 was vast beyond understanding. His estimated net worth in modern currency would be well in excess of \$400 billion. Job satisfaction among his staff was higher than most of us could imagine, and his international reputation commanded respect and admiration from all nations at that time. Was he the greatest ruler?

We certainly cannot dispute the greatness of these three elements. They were each magnificent in their own right, and their fame secures a place for them in history. In Matthew chapter 12, our Lord Jesus Christ gave His own assessments of greatness, which are well worth our time to consider.

The Great Temple in Matthew 12:6

"Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple"

Our Lord was responding to yet another Pharisaic challenge from their Talmudic traditions. He referenced David's entering the tabernacle to eat the showbread, and the temple priests who often profaned the Sabbath with their conduct. They had placed the symbols ahead of the realities in their estimation, which occupies so much of the book of Hebrews.

All of these things, (i.e., the showbread, the altar, the priesthood, and even the temple itself), were but figures of the true (Heb 9:24). As the fulfillment of every type and picture, the Lord Jesus was greater than the sum of them. Signs and maps are used to point us to a destination, but they are not the destination. The Lord Jesus Christ was present in their midst, and He was greater than the temple in every respect.

The Great Preacher in Matthew 12:41

"The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here."

While our Lord was here, He often had large audiences following Him and listening to Him. Often they had selfish motives, but they heard Him nonetheless. Many of His

audiences numbered in the thousands, many believed on Him as He spoke, and many followed Him wherever He went. Yet neither the size of the audience nor the number of converts is used to assess His value as a Preacher.


The greatness of the Preacher has to do with both His character and the content of His message. Our Lord continually taught what the Father had spoken to Him. His audiences did not always react positively, but that was not an indicator of greatness or success. He was pointing people to God, which is the greatest message any preacher can preach.

The Great Ruler in Matthew 12:42

"The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here."

The expansive domain and influence of Solomon were without equal in the ancient world. There have been very few rulers since who have achieved anything close to what he did, and that by peaceable means. His rule was characterized by industry, a productive and happy society, and the just application of his vast knowledge to the varying circumstances encountered. As rulers go, he was one of the finest.

The scope of our Lord's jurisdiction is the entire universe. It spans all of time, all cultures, all distances, and all systems of government. He is Lord of lords and King of kings. While citizens of this or that nationality may salute their flags and make grandiose claims, He who will one day rule all things is the greatest of rulers. His rule will be in righteousness, and of His dominion there will be no end. If the magnificence of a ruler is anything to boast of, then Christians have Someone to boast of Who is peerless in His magnificence.

How do we assess greatness? If we only use visible comparisons as standards, then we are missing the intrinsic eternal value of the twos and threes who gather together in His Name all over the planet. This is the church which He loved and gave Himself for. May we never underestimate its worth to Him, and never under value it by temporal means of evaluation. 



Rick Morse lives in Berwick, Nova Scotia with Janie, his wife of 40 years. They fellowship at Bethany Gospel Chapel in Dartmouth, NS. Saved at age 21, he is active in his home assembly and frequently ministers in many assemblies in Atlantic Canada. Rick's speaking and written ministry centers on love for apologetics and earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

by Rick Morse

THE LONG WAY *Home*

THE TESTIMONY OF
ALLAN THOMPSON

"COME AND HEAR, ALL YOU WHO FEAR GOD,
AND I WILL DECLARE WHAT HE HAS DONE
FOR MY SOUL."
PSALM 66:16

COME & HEAR

The grass felt cool and comforting on my back as I laid my head back and closed my eyes. But the pain in my leg raced up and down from my toes to my stomach like the clawing of a furious animal. White haze filled my vision and I felt sick to my stomach.

That morning had started perfectly. Mild, sunny weather was what I had wanted. We had planned to spend our day riding our dirt bikes through the countryside. I had risen early to clean, oil and adjust it to be ready for a long ride. A few runs in the driveway would check its readiness, I thought. To my surprise, in the middle of a wheelie, the engine sputtered, dropping the bike to one side. My leg went out to steady myself and the force of the fall was too much for my knee joint.

My brother helped me to the emergency room where a surgeon examined the injury. The expression on his face told what his thoughts were—back again; don't you ever learn? Two years earlier, this doctor had repaired damage in that same knee. As I thought about that previous surgery, memories of my father's visit came to me. He had stood by my bed and quietly asked, "Don't you think God is trying to tell you something?" All those thoughts came back to me again. Yes, God was dealing with me, and I was resisting Him, preferring my own path of earthly "fun." Why would He not leave me alone?

I had been raised in a home where the Word of God (the Bible) was revered. We were taught of mankind's fall to a sinful state and how Christ could lift us out of that darkened path. I had my eyes and thoughts on other things and gazed out at the world. Anything that came along and seemed exciting was what I wanted.

Growing up, I loved to play sports and that occupied my mind and time. The school teams were my goal, and they were successful. We won local and regional championships allowing me to wear a school jacket displaying the crests of

our victories. It was exhilarating to stand before the whole student body and receive the awards for our success. But that feeling did not last long. Soon I was back to my day-to-day life as a student, having to cope just like everyone else. The next athletic success would only come with a lot of practice and sweat.

During the years of secondary education, another of my passions developed. Music made my fingers tap and my feet dance. Rhythm and blues were the music that moved me most and soon a few friends and I were getting together to play music. We practiced seriously and eventually had a band that was good enough to play at dances and taste a bit of the nightlife. My parents were not happy, but I was old enough to make some decisions on my own. Being out late to early morning hours with the band meant Sunday mornings I was too tired to go to the meetings of the Lord's people. Soon I was skipping out on the evening meeting also, more occupied with having a good time than with my eternal needs before a Holy God.

In the middle of all my waywardness God spoke to me very clearly. I had a cousin who was my age and was close to me. We had been together quite a lot and enjoyed each other's company. One night in a single car accident, his life was gone. During the funeral service, I stared at his casket, ensnared by the stark reality of death, yes even of a young person. I anxiously wondered, where would my soul be if I were the one in that casket?

Satan continued to distract and amuse me with all his devices. Soon I was back to my old self, looking for some new thing to enjoy. Being with other musicians and the party crowd, I had started drinking to enjoy myself more. The problem was I did not handle alcohol well and would be sick and hung over after a "good time." Still, I went back to it, even after sometimes vowing to never do that again. The

desire for new experiences and a good time had ensnared me, even though I did not see it that way.

During my college years, peace, love, and the “hippie” philosophy caught me up. We protested the “establishment” and its deceitful ways, not knowing that we too were being used to propagate even a bigger lie. Drugs were to open your mind, expand your understanding, and I fell right into it all. At last, I felt like I could have a good time and not get sick. We all felt we were having a good time. Don’t think about the ones who “fried their minds.” Don’t consider the “unlucky” who died of an overdose or drug induced acts of death. Almost frantically we searched for the fleeting glimpse of newness, a short moment of pleasure.

There began to be cracks in my life of self-indulgence. God had not left me to myself. People spoke to me about God at unexpected moments. A sincere Christian man prayed that I would know my soul secure eternally by the blood of Christ. He cared more about my soul than I did. The thought hit hard and would not leave me.

One night at our regular bar, two men broke beer bottles and slashed at each other. On another occasion, in the bar across the alley, a man walked in with a shotgun and shot his wife who had been with someone else. There was blood on the bar floor, death in the place of pleasure. I walked home with my girlfriend thinking, “and they call this a good time?”

A friend and I had planned to hitchhike through Europe, so I moved home when I was twenty-three. It was during this time that I fell on the motorcycle, injuring my knee. I could not work for two months and spent a lot of time around the house. My parents asked if I would go to some gospel meetings and to be agreeable, I went. The message struck me with my need of being made right with God. At night sometimes I would shake, thinking about dying, not ready to meet God and being cast out into eternal darkness. An uncle spoke to me and left me some tracts to read. I read them and put them away.

Europe beckoned and I made my plans to travel. We left New York on an ocean liner for six days of easy living. From Southampton we hitched to London for a few days, then north to Scotland and the Isle of Skye. There a former school friend and fellow musician was living for a couple of years with relatives. We enjoyed the reunion and the party started. But I didn’t enjoy the laughter. I did not feel like dancing.

We stayed in a small trailer outside Portree. At night the usual was to go to the pubs and then back to one of the homes until the early morning hours. This was not what I needed and one evening I excused myself to go back to the trailer. Settling into the sleeping bag my sleep was uneasy. Shortly my eyes opened. I felt ill and my head was spinning. As I got to my feet, I noticed the fire was out in the heater. The trailer was full of gas. I had to get out now.

As the cool October air cleared my head, the reality of the situation came to me. Death had come close. I had sensed the terror of meeting God in my sinful condition. My early


years had taught me about God, but I did not know Him in a personal way. Now the reality of hell for a Christ-rejecting sinner made me see there was only one way—God’s way. My sin had caused the separation between me and God. My sin kept me in the bondage of the fear of death. The result of sin, and eternal damnation were impressed upon me. I needed the Savior, but how? Could I believe? Would He accept me?

A couple days later, we went to Edinburgh to another friend’s home to visit and see the local sights. It was a quiet time, and I was glad to have time to ponder my spiritual needs. I had memorized Scripture in my early years and thought that in a moment like this I would just grab a verse, believe, and all would be okay. Now I had a dark sense of being helpless and hopeless.

We left the city hitchhiking south to Dover to cross over to France. The rides were slow, but we finally got a ride in a delivery van, and we sat in the back on our packs. As the truck rolled along, I was quiet, thinking. I had put off God for many years, not listening to the invitation of Jesus. Had I gone too far? Where was He now that I wanted Him? In that moment of despair, a verse of the Bible came to me—“Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). The solid promise of the Savior. Yes, He loved me. He died for me and shed His blood to cleanse me from my sin. Right there I came to Jesus, confessing my sin, believing in my heart He died for me. What joy, what relief. The burden was all gone! On that day at the end of October, just about noon I was saved, born again, now finally a child of God on my way home to heaven.

Returning home a few months later to my friends and areas of my old life was a daunting time. What would they think of me? Could I live the life of a believer? Being near old “places of pleasure” would be a test as to the reality of the power of Christ. Old friends were amazed at the change of lifestyle. Some were skeptical, some very interested. My new Friend was with me always. He faithfully guided, corrected and encouraged me to grow as a believer. What a blessing to know Jesus Christ as Savior, as Lord, and as my gentle Shepherd.

The next year, the Lord pointed out a sweet Christian woman and we were soon married, starting life together in Christ. Shortly after our marriage I received a letter telling of the salvation of my European traveling companion and his wife. What a gracious God we have to see us safely on the

long way to our eternal, heavenly home. Reader, come in faith to Christ and He will in no wise cast you out, but will securely keep you all the long way home to glory. 



Allan Thompson is a self-employed business owner who attends Northside Bible Chapel in Barrie, Ontario. He also serves on the oversight in that assembly

by Allan D. Thompson

The DANGERS of Replacement Theology



For the past 150 years, the evangelical church has given great emphasis to God's promises to the nation of Israel. Christians were those who rejoiced the loudest when Israel became a nation on May 14, 1948. Evangelical Christians understood that God would be faithful to these irrevocable promises to Israel. As the ever-faithful God, He has bound Himself to His Word! He will not forsake His people. The apostle Paul reminds us, "I say then, hath God cast away His people? God forbid" (Rom. 11:1).

However, in recent years, more and more Christian leaders are beginning to turn their backs on Israel. Christian radio preacher Hank Hanegraaff argues in his 2006 book *Apocalypse Code* that Israel has no future in the plan of God. Reformed writer Keith Mathison in his 2010 book *Post-Millennialism: Eschatology of Hope*, denies that God will fulfill His promises to Israel. In a recent sermon on Romans chapter eleven, prominent Calvinistic Bible teacher John Piper stated:

The promises made to Abraham, including the promise of the Land, will be inherited as an everlasting gift only by spiritual Israel, not disobedient, unbelieving Israel...the promises cannot be demanded by anyone just because he is Jewish... Being born Jewish does not make one an heir of the promise—neither the promise of the Land nor any other promise.¹

Christian leaders, such as the late R. C. Sproul, John Piper, and others, argue that because Israel has been unfaithful to God, these Old Testament promises are now given to Christians. This doctrine is called *Replacement Theology* or "Supersessionism" by academics. Replacement theology is the view that the church has permanently replaced or superseded Israel as the people of God. The church will inherit all these Old Testament promises. In recent years, replacement theology has gained more and more popularity among evangelical Christians. Throughout history, it has been the fuel that has energized violent anti-Semitism, Eastern European pogroms, the Holocaust, and disdain for the modern state of Israel.

Definition and Description

Replacement theology teaches that God has rescinded all His promises to Israel and has bestowed these promises on the Church. Bible teacher and author Dr. Renald Showers explains:

Replacement theology is a theological view of the world that claims God is forever finished with Israel as a nation. Therefore, God's promises in the Abrahamic Covenant to give the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the land

of Canaan as an eternal inheritance are no longer in effect with national Israel.²

According to this view, God is finished with Israel and is working only with the church of God. Replacement leaders teach that the church of Jesus Christ replaces racial, national Israel and becomes God's sole focus for the rest of biblical time. Israel has no future in the plan of God. All the blessings of Israel in the Old and New Testaments have become the blessings of the church for the rest of time. The Church inherits all the blessings, while Israel is meant to endure only the curses.

The Rise of Replacement Theology

The New Testament Church began during the first century in the decade between A.D. 30 and 40. It was first centered in Jerusalem and, initially, was predominantly Jewish. Many of these early Jewish believers had little desire to turn their backs on Judaism. They saw Christianity as the fulfillment, not the enemy, of the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They expected that all Jews would embrace Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah, as they had done. Sadly however, the Jews in Israel would reject Christ and in time, take up arms to severely persecute the early Christians. This persecution forced these Christians to scatter to nearby cities and villages. As a result, many Samaritans and Gentiles were reached with the gospel. These Gentile believers did not view the Old Testament promises to Israel with the same passion as the early Jewish believers. These Gentile Christians began to teach that because the Jewish people, by and large, had rejected God, God had rejected them, and the church now had become the chosen people. They claimed that God had permanently ended His unique relationship with Israel and had replaced it with the Church.

By the second century, replacement theology had become entrenched in the minds of many Christian leaders. Although the church leaders at this time were predominantly pre-millennial in their understanding of future things, they embraced the idea of replacement theology. Around A.D. 160, early Christian apologist Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165) was the first to write that the Christian church was the true spiritual Israel. In a work called *Dialogue of Justin Martyr with Trypho a Jew*, he explained that Christians are the true Israelite race and that the "seed of Jacob," when properly understood, referred to Christians. Justin's views laid the groundwork for the growing belief that the church had replaced Israel. By the end of the third century, replacement teaching became anchored in most of the churches in Europe and the Middle East.

Today, non-evangelical churches have embraced replacement theology. Roman Catholic churches since the time of Augustine have rigidly held to this view, along with Lutheran, Presbyterian, Anglican, Methodist, and most Reformed and Calvinistic denominations, and the Emerging Church movement. Fortunately, for the last 150 years, dispensational and evangelical Bible churches have vigorously resisted the inroads of replacement theology.

Replacement Theology and Anti-Semitism

Replacement theology has had a devastating effect on the Jewish people, as well as on many important biblical

doctrines. From its earliest days to the present time, replacement theology has been a catalyst for violence and anti-Semitic attitudes in the church. Replacement Christians, since the third century, have been active in persecuting the Jewish people throughout the world. This persecution first began under anti-Semitic Roman Catholic bishops. Later, Lutherans led by the reformer Martin Luther were involved in stirring up strong anti-Jewish prejudice in Germany.

Adolf Hitler read and deeply appreciated Luther's anti-Jewish tracts. His doctrine provided Hitler with many
Continued on page 13...

Report: Into Your Bible

With a desire to see a new generation love the Word of God and the God of the Word, the *Into Your Bible* podcast with Nate Bramsen was launched in May of 2022. Following verse-by-verse exposition, this Bible study program features a new episode every other Monday. Currently, the Book of Exodus is being studied. It is available in video format on YouTube (@intoyourbible) or through audio podcast format on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Amazon Music, etc. Though this podcast was initially launched to inspire the younger generation to dive into God's Word, it is appropriate for every disciple of Christ—whether individually or in small groups, and Sunday school classes.

Living in an age where many want truth to be relative stating "that's my truth" or "that's your truth," the Word of God declares a drastically different message. John 17:17 declares "Your Word is Truth"—truth that "will set you free" (John 8:32).

Consequently, this podcast has three aims for every episode. First, our primary aim is to **STICK TO THE SCRIPTURES**.


This is not to say we do not use illustrations, quotes, and insights from others, but in the end, this is a Bible study where we want to ask the question, "What does the text say?" and "How does it fit into the big picture of Scripture?" Thus, we want to understand the passage in the context of the biblical language, geography, and culture.

Second, our desire is to **SEE THE SAVIOR**. The Greeks said to Philip, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus!" (John 12:21). This too, is our longing. When Jesus walked alongside the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, the Word

says that "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). Again, in John 5:39-40, Jesus told a group of Jews, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." In every podcast of *Into Your Bible*, it is of utmost priority to see the beauties of our Savior in the passage.

Finally, there is a need to **SUBMIT TO THE SPIRIT**. *Into Your Bible* is not about a mere intellectual pursuit, but about true intimacy with the Lord. In each podcast, the question is asked, "How should we **respond** to the Word?" This is not primarily about knowing more **about** God, though we hope that happens. Rather, this is about knowing God. The Lord Jesus said in John 14:21, "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

May this podcast be a conduit of blessing to saints who love

the Lord Jesus and the vehicle to introduce the lost to the beauty of our Savior. As we close every podcast, our prayer is that in this ministry, a new generation will come to love the Word of God and the God of the Word. 

Nate Bramsen was born and raised in Senegal, West Africa. He today carries out a global itinerant speaking schedule, podcasts, and works with teams taking the Gospel to unreached areas. In 2018 he married Priyanka and they have two daughters. He is the author of two books, "What If Jesus Meant What He Said" and "Prosper: Enjoying Intimacy with God."

by Nate Bramsen



FOUNDATIONS

of the faith

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

It has been my privilege to be part of an international group studying the Scriptures by Zoom. Just recently, we began a study of the Gospel of Matthew. What a blessing this has been! In the opening verses of chapter 1, we have the genealogy of Jesus Christ, which attests to His having the credentials to occupy the throne of David in a coming day. The rest of the chapter, through chapter 2, records details of what is called the virgin birth of Christ, and the preservation of His life in early childhood. However, a more accurate description for “the virgin birth” is, “The Virginal Conception and Birth of Jesus Christ.”

It is interesting to note how the detail of Christ’s birth and the opposition He faced centers around five dreams, four of which involved Joseph. The fifth involved the wise men. All five contain warnings or commands, while three prompted action that would fulfill biblical prophecy (Matt. 1:23; 2:15, 23).

The closing verses of chapter 1 (vv.18–25), to which the first dream belongs, is worthy of our initial focus. Christmas is fast approaching—or perhaps behind you by the time you receive this magazine—and these verses concerning Christ’s conception and birth are likely to have been read in churches and schools millions of times. Frequently, however, they are likely to have been little more than a ritual with no earnestness of the heart. Little wonder you might say, when one



considers that there are those in ecclesiastical positions who do not believe in the Bible's account of the virgin birth of Christ.

Those who deny the virgin birth need to realize there are many Old Testament prophecies concerning the timing, place, and manner of Christ's birth. Do they accept some and reject others? If so, why? If they reject them all, but accept other prophecies not associated with His birth, why the difference?

True believers are not without fault, either. We often rush over verses of scripture without taking the time to study and meditate upon them. That includes the Christmas story, no matter how "familiar" we may be with it. Now is the opportunity to re-examine these verses in Matthew's Gospel. After all, rather than being myth, they are the bedrock of one of the most important doctrines in all of Scripture.

Writing to Timothy, the apostle Paul could say, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). As someone has said, it tells us what is right (doctrine); it tells us what is not right (reproof); it tells us how to get right (correction); and it tells us how to stay right (instruction)!

Considering that all Scripture is inspired, humanity is not at liberty to pick only those parts acceptable to it. Besides, I cannot imagine how one could promote the message of the Bible while denying the virgin birth. Under six headings, we note key truths concerning the virgin birth:

1. The Revelation

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise..." (Matt. 1:18). The account that follows the phrase "on this wise" is fact rather than fiction. Cast your eye to 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

2. The Instrumentation

"When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph..." (Matt. 1:18). Mary was the woman God chose to bring his Son into this world. She was a virgin. When the angel Gabriel told her she would conceive in her womb and bring forth a son, she asked, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:31-34). The virgin birth of Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the prophecy stated in Isaiah 7:14, as reaffirmed in Matt. 1:22-23. Isaiah 7:14 states, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Carefully note the words **son**, **his** and **Immanuel**, all of which denote gender. Today, some parents know the gender of their baby during pregnancy, but never prior to conception unless one goes down a dubious route!

3. The Conception

"She was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:18); "For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:20). The conception of Jesus Christ was not natural, but supernatural.

4. The Incarnation

"Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). He was conceived by the Holy Ghost (Matt. 1:20)—thus holy and separate from sinners (Heb. 7:26). This is why the prophet Isaiah in chapter 9 and verse 6 could make the distinction in the opening words, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given."


5. The Salvation

"Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). The name Jesus means Savior. He is the only one who can save sinners. Acts 4:12 reminds us, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

6. The Designation and Interpretation

"They shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is God with us" (Matt. 1:23). Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). Two things are abundantly clear: (1) the "virgin birth" was the means by which the eternal Son of God became incarnate, and (2) the "virgin birth" was the means by which He was born holy and sinless, thus making Him the only Savior of sinners. Denying these truths deprives the gospel message of its sound basis.

Those who deny the virgin birth often quote verses such as Galatians 4:4—"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law..." where the virginity of the woman is not mentioned. However, this is easily explained by the fact that the virginity of the woman is not the subject under discussion. As always, the context is all-important!

Finally, in a world that has much to discourage us, why not make Isaiah 9 verses 6 and 7 your anchor verses for 2023—"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever..." 



Alan McIlwaine is a retired police officer from N. Ireland. Most of his 30 year service was during a sustained terrorist campaign when 302 of his colleagues lost their lives. Saved at age 17, he has been associated with several assemblies commensurate with his career postings. He has written legal articles, edited a periodical and written three books (one his memoirs) and published others. Married to Helen, Alan is the father of four and grandfather of ten.

by Alan McIlwaine

ISRAEL'S FUTURE

Glory

It was on May 14, 1948, that David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel. On the same day, United States President Harry S. Truman also recognized the new nation. It was an improbable event in the world's eyes. After centuries of exile, the Jews finally had their homeland back. Indeed, Israel had undergone repeated foreign domination by various nations—captivity, exile, dispersion, extermination, holocaust, and humiliation, but were never snuffed out from the face of the earth. If ever there was a solid, consistent, tangible, and verifiable proof of the existence of God, it is the continued existence of Israel, despite being brought to near extinction multiple times.

Indeed, more amazing yet, is Israel's future glory and ultimate earthly supremacy among the global nations, many of which are bigger and militarily "mightier"¹ than Israel. This is a truth foretold in the Scriptures—a future fact often ignored or overlooked by many, including professing Christians. These news headlines of tomorrow are prophesied in Zechariah 12-14 and in a more detailed revelation in Isaiah 60.


Before the above takes place, the Bible tells us of certain events that need to transpire first. The snatching away or rapture of the church when the Lord Jesus Christ comes in the air² for His believers—the body of His church must happen first. With the church and the indwelling Holy Spirit out of the way, the spirit of the Anti-Christ will begin his influence. A period of seven years referred to as the Tribulation or "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7) will then be ushered in. This is the time of unprecedented tribulation for Jacob's descendants—the Jews, the nation of Israel. Although the Abrahamic Covenant is everlasting, it is conditional on the descendants continuing faithful to God. When they fell into idolatry and sin, God had to punish and discipline them to bring them back. Over the years, Israel lapsed into a vicious cycle of sin, punishment, and restoration.

The Tribulation is the climax of Israel's discipline. The prophet Zechariah tells us that Israel will be surrounded by enemies. In fact, the city of Jerusalem will be taken and occupied, the "houses rifled, and the women ravished, and

half the city will go forth into captivity..." But the "residue of the people shall not be cut off" (Zech. 14:2). In such dire straits, the Lord Jesus will then return to earth with all His saints. His feet will actually touch down on the Mount of Olives. The Lord Jesus will go forth and fight against those nations that came to besiege Jerusalem and Israel (Zech. 14:3). The destruction of the enemies is described in graphic detail: "the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths" (Zech. 14:12).

But there will be no massive outburst of joyous celebrations in Israel over the defeat of all their enemies in the face of their imminent and certain defeat and annihilation. Instead, God will pour out His "Spirit of grace and supplication: and they shall look upon Me (the Lord Jesus speaking as Yahweh through the prophet), Whom they have pierced..." (Zech. 12:10) and the Jews will realize they had crucified their Messiah, Who is Yahweh. Israel will fall into deep mourning and repentance and realize that Jesus was "wounded for their transgression, bruised for their iniquities, and the chastisement of their peace was laid upon Him."³ This deep mourning is not only national but also personal, as "every family apart and their wives apart" weep in true contrition at their monumental mistake. Jews both individually and collectively will acknowledge the Lord Jesus as their Messiah, "Lord (Yahweh) and...God" (John 20:28).

Then the Lord Jesus who during His first advent had come into Jerusalem riding lowly on a donkey will now rule as King in Jerusalem and usher in the millennium reign of a 1000 years (Rev. 20:3-4). Jerusalem will be the capital⁴ not only of Israel but of the world: "And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16). The gates of Jerusalem will be open continually and people and commerce will flow in and out ceaselessly (Isa. 60:6-9, 11). There will be economic prosperity: gold and silver will be in abundance (Isa. 60:17).

Jesus of Nazareth shall rule with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:27). “For the nation and kingdom which will not serve You shall perish, and those nations shall be utterly ruined” (Isa. 60:12). Righteousness and peace shall prevail (Isa. 60:18). Gentile nations like Babylon and Persia⁵ which were used of God to discipline Israel and Judah in the past, will be used by the same God, the Lord of hosts, to rebuild Israel and Jerusalem. Previously, Cyrus the Great, king of Persia from 559-530 BC was instrumental in allowing the Jews to return from their exile to rebuild the temple and walls of Jerusalem.⁶ How ironic it would be if present day Iran, an avowed enemy of Israel, in the future, should be providing the security of Israel and Jerusalem as one of the “sons of foreigners shall build up your walls” (Isa. 60:10) and acknowledging the supremacy of Israel: “the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you, and all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet” (Isa. 60:14). Then the disciple’s prayer will be fulfilled: “Your kingdom come. Your will be done. On earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). 

Endnotes:

1. Because the Lord Jesus Who is Yahweh is with Israel. “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6
2. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. The rapture is to be distinguished from the second coming back to earth when His feet shall touch Mount Olivet; “This

- same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1:11
3. Isaiah 53:5 See also PT Tan, *Israel Repentance Hymn in 2021 Cornerstone March April Issue*
 4. On December 6, 2017, President Trump officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The US Embassy opened at its Jerusalem location on May 14, 2018.
 5. Now, Iran, which is currently hostile against Israel, attempting to acquire nuclear weapons and threatening Israel’s existence.
 6. Isaiah 45:1-3. See also Briant, P., *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, (Trans. version), Indiana (2002), p. 46.



PT Tan and his wife Juio fellowship with the New Hampshire Avenue Gospel Chapel in Silver Spring, Maryland where he had served as an elder for over 30 years and President of the board of trustees for over 20 years. A retired attorney, PT practiced law as a partner of a few large international law firms for over 30 years in Washington, DC. He is currently on the boards of Bible Conferences Corporation and Cornerstone Magazine, Inc.

by PT Tan

Continued from page 9....


suitable texts for his extermination program. The most vicious, Jew-hating statements Luther ever made were to be found in his tract entitled *Concerning the Jews and Their Lives*. In it, he stated:

“Let me give you my honest advice. First, their synagogues or churches should be set on fire. And whatever does not burn up should be covered or spread over with dirt so that no one may ever be able to see a cinder or stone of it. And this ought to be done for the honor of God and of Christianity in order that God may see that we are Christians... Secondly, their homes should be broken down and destroyed. Thirdly, they should be deprived of their prayer books and the Talmud in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught. Fourthly, their rabbis must be forbidden under the threat of death to teach anymore...Fifthly, passport and traveling privileges should be absolutely forbidden to Jews...”³

Two days after writing this tract, Martin Luther died! Sadly, however, replacement theology’s practice of anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish attitudes is still active in the world.

Conclusion

Although Replacement Theology has had its champions in the church since the second century, in this case, time

does not improve doctrinal faithfulness. Replacement Theology has corrupted and degraded both the church’s doctrine and practice. Replacement Theology has resulted in some of the darkest periods of persecution and anti-Semitism. Today, in many ways, Preterism, Covenant Theology, Amillennialism, and Calvinism continue this unfortunate tradition of prejudice and unsound Bible doctrine. May we be aware of the dangers of replacement theology and exhort Christians to be faithful to Bible doctrine and sensitive to the Jewish people. 

Endnotes:

1. <http://www.enjoyinggodministries.com/article/the-church-israel-and-replacement-theology-part-iii/>
2. Renald Showers, *The Coming Apocalypse*, (Friends of Israel, Bellmawr, NJ, 2010), p. 7-8
3. Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works, The Christian in Society*, vol. 4, (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 268-293



David Dunlap is president of Cornerstone Magazine. He has been a full-time worker for over thirty years. He is in fellowship at Land O’ Lakes Bible Chapel, in Lutz, FL. He and his wife Faith live in Land O’ Lakes, FL.

by David Dunlap



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Accommodations

You have to contact Hickory Knob and reserve your own space. Our contact is Ms. Chris Elswick and her phone number is 864-391-2450, ext. 193. Her email is celswick@scprt.com. Chris has a number of campsites, cabins and rooms on hold for a "first come, first served" basis. If Chris is not available, you can speak to any reservation host but reference Summerville Bible Fellowship.

Speaker

Mr. Rob Sullivan will be our speaker for the four formal conference sessions. We have secured the Conference Center on the campus grounds to host our sessions. 1 Friday evening; 2 on Saturday, and 1 on Sunday.

Cost

To cover the cost of renting our conference space there will be a charge of \$20 per person for all attendees 5 years old and up. Once you have secured your reservation with Hickory Knob State Resort Park, please mail a check for the charge stated above to Skip Elliott, PO Box 3135, Summerville, SC 29484. An offering will be collected on Sunday morning to fellowship with our speaker and defray other conference costs.

If you have any questions please contact Skip Elliott at 843-607-6990 or email skip@elliottmarketingllc.com.

ISSUES *and* ANSWERS

"Search The Scriptures..." John 5:39

Who were the wise men? (Matthew 2:1-12)

Since the Bible says they came from the east (v. 1), the wise men (*magi in the original; G3097*) were likely from Persia or southern Arabia, both of which lay east of Israel.¹ That they used the term "King of the Jews" for Jesus would suggest that they were Gentiles (v. 2).

From the name "Magi" we get the English words "magic" and "magician." In Daniel's time, the Magi (magicians and enchanters) specialized in the study of astrology, magic arts, and possibly other occult practices (Dan. 1:20; 2:2, 27; 5:7). The Babylonians referred to them as the "wise men" (Dan. 2:12, 18, 24, 27; 5:7-8, 11-12).² As well, these wise men were also proficient in astronomy, philosophy, science, and medicine.


From the three gifts they brought with them, many have assumed there were only three men, one with each gift (v. 11). Tradition also suggests three men naming them Caspar, Balthasar, and Melchior.³ However, in truth we cannot be certain of their names, nor do we know how many magi traveled to Jerusalem because Scripture is silent on this matter.

Numbers 24:17 says "...A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel..." With many Jews remaining in Babylon after the 70-year captivity ended, and with the diaspora spreading to other lands, the Magi could have been familiar with and maybe even studied this and other Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. Well-versed in astronomy, these men would also have noticed the appearance of an unfamiliar "star." It is also possible that the Lord spoke directly to these seekers, perhaps in a dream.

Following the star, these seeking hearts came to Jerusalem, a short distance from Bethlehem. It is reasonable that they would have expected the Son of David to be born in Jerusalem. After the chief priests and scribes told Herod that the prophets foretold the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, the king sent the Magi there exhorting them to search diligently for the child (v. 8). When the wise men set out for the little town, the star "went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was" (v. 9). In other words, the star went ahead of them, leading them.

There have been many natural explanations about the "Star in the East." These accounts invariably involve how the planets aligned at that particular moment in history

resulting in a bright light. However, the "star" was probably not an ordinary star, planet or comet. The extraordinary movement of the star (v. 9) suggests something or Someone else. Both the Hebrew and Greek words for star can be used figuratively to represent any great brilliance or radiance. It is more than likely the glory of the Lord guided these seeking men much like the pillar of cloud guided Israel by day and the pillar of fire by night soon after their redemption from Egypt. This star was a manifestation of the Shekinah Glory, the very presence of God.

The same outshining of God's glory that guided these wise men, also shone around the shepherds many months earlier when the angels announced the Lord's birth (Luke 2:9). Since there is no evidence from Scripture that anyone else saw this "star" it appears that God was specifically leading these true seekers to Christ. The magi visited Jesus in a house (v. 11), not in an inn or stable (Luke 2:7) suggesting some time had elapsed since His birth. The Lord may even have been in His second year, considering Herod's order to kill all the male children in Bethlehem under the age of two (Matt. 2:16). When these men from the east saw Christ, they fell down and worshipped the young Child. Having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, they returned home using another route. The main lesson for us today is that God rewards true seekers, bringing them to Christ. 

Endnotes:

- 1 *Archaeological Study Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), Electronic Version*
- 2 *Complete Word Study Dictionary (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2013), Electronic Version*
- 3 *Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2013), Electronic Version*



George Ferrier is a full-time worker commended by Bridlewood Bible Chapel (Ottawa, ON). In addition to itinerant preaching and teaching at assemblies and conferences in North America and overseas, he is on the board of Cornerstone Magazine Inc. where he also serves as assistant editor. He fellowships at Bethel-Park Bible Chapel in Brantford, ON.

by **George Ferrier**

News & Notices



Shining Lights Youth Retreat

Grace Gospel Chapel
1642 Ehrets Lane, Allentown PA
March 10-12, 2023

Grace Gospel Chapel in Allentown is planning the return of the Shining Lights Youth Retreat! The retreat for high-school, college, and career-aged youth will be held on March 10-12, 2023. This year's theme is City on A Hill, and the speaker is Dan Weaver! Registration opens December 10th, 2022 until February 10th, 2023. To register, email retreat@gracegospel.us. It is free of charge for any who would like to attend, and accommodations can be provided. For more information contact Elisabeth Schwarz at retreat@gracegospel.us 484-661-7578.

2023 Dallas Area Spring Conference

April 1-2, 2023

Wheatland Bible Chapel
1303 W. Wheatland Rd, Duncanville, TX 75116

Lord willing, the annual Dallas Area Spring Conference will be held April 1-2, 2023 at Wheatland Bible Chapel. The speakers will be Warren Henderson (Stevensville, MT) and Craig Shakarji (Rockville, MD). The conference will be held on Saturday, 10 AM - 4 PM with lunch served at 12 noon; Following noon lunch on Sunday, the conference will conclude with ministry from 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM. For more information contact Doug Rice at johndrice@sbcglobal.net or 469-387-5535.

With the Lord

Dwight Beavers, the founder of "Voices for Christ", went home to be with the Lord in the early morning hours of October 10, 2022. Born in 1943, born again in December 1970, Dwight launched into the spread of the Gospel with enormous energy. Initially focused on tract distribution in the Durham, NC area, he moved on to collecting and duplicating cassette tapes of reliable ministry. What we know as "Voices for Christ" was born.

Dwight expanded from cassettes to reels, to CD/DVD, and to MP3 files, doing his very best to keep up with efficient ways to make good Christian teaching available. Today, the ministry he founded freely distributes tens of thousands of mp3 files per day with an extremely efficient incremental cost. Dwight had eagerly awaited the Lord's coming for many years. After his body had suffered for the last several years, we know he is happier now than he has ever been and is in the very presence of the Lord whom he loved and served.

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."
Psalm 116:15

Executive Director – Horton Haven Christian Camp

The board of Horton Haven Christian Camp in Lewisburg, TN, is prayerfully and carefully seeking an individual to serve in the role of Executive Director. A job description and an application are available upon request should you or someone you know be interested in filling this position. If so, please contact Jon Glock at jonwglock@gmail.com or call 563-580-3884.

Ministry Opportunity

A new Camp Registrar is needed at Morning Star Bible Camp in West Kelowna, BC, Canada, effective immediately to plan for 2023. Computer and people skills are a must. Contact Josh at manager@morningstarbiblecamp.com for more information.

Hymn Books Available

If your assembly is in need of hymn books there are about 80 Hymns of Worship and Praise, and about 70 Hymns of Truth and Praise available for the cost of shipping. All of the hymnals are in good condition. Most of them are embossed "Hollywood Bible Chapel." For more information contact Doug Rice at doug@stewardsfoundation.org or 972-726-6550.

Coins of the Bible

Coins of the Bible collection for sale, containing over 170 authentic ancient coins, most of them in circulation at the time of Jesus and His disciples. Emphasis is on specific coins mentioned in the Bible as well as those struck/minted in all the cities visited by the apostle Paul on his missionary journeys throughout the Roman world. Background information and descriptions of each coin are provided in both English and French. Sale includes documentation as to the provenance of each coin together with the following books: The Pocket Guide to Saint Paul: Coins encountered by the Apostle in his Travels by Lewis and Bolden; Ancient Coins Through the Bible by Joseph Dow; David Hendin's Guide to Biblical Coins (fifth edition); Ancient Coin Collecting by Sayles (volumes I-IV); Money in the Bible by Kenneth Bressett and more. For details contact Richard Strout at stroutrv@bell.net.

Seeking to Meet With Like-Minded Believers

A couple is seeking to meet with like-minded believers in accordance with New Testament church principles in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Please contact Todd Knight at 540-435-5553 for more information.



Legacy Ministry Services

Believers Stewardship Services is excited to announce that we have chosen a new name for our organization, Legacy Ministry Services, which will be in effect beginning on January 1, 2023. Legacy will continue to provide the same services we have always provided to God's people under this new branding. It is our desire to use this new identity to distinguish ourselves among the many wonderful assembly ministries, while also aligning with our Canadian sister ministry, Legacy Ministries Canada. For those who currently use our services, we have taken the necessary steps to ensure nothing will be affected by this change. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about Legacy's estate planning and charitable giving services, please contact Rob Sullivan at rsullivan@bssmatters.com or Nathan Griffiths at ngriffiths@legacycanada.org. You can also visit our new website, which will launch on January 1, at legacyministryservices.com.

Note on tax-deductible receipts

A 2022 tax-deductible receipt will be issued for gifts received or postmarked on or before December 31, 2022. A 2023 tax-deductible receipt will be issued for gifts received or postmarked after December 31, 2022.

The Cornerstone committee wishes to express their heart-felt appreciation to all who have had a part in prayer or have financially participated in the work of this ministry. God is able.

We Want Your News & Notices!

Do you have a conference, event, or service opportunity you wish to advertise to print subscribers from across Canada and the United States, and to online readers on every continent? Submit 2-3 months in advance of the issue you would like it to appear in for print, or 3-4 months in advance for two months inclusion.

Submit online: cornerstonemagazine.org or by email: news@cornerstonemagazine.org



Since 1945, Stewards Foundation has been in the business of building and fostering relationships with New Testament patterned assemblies. While our loans have benefitted numerous assemblies, we are more than just a lender—we are trusted resource for loan-related matters.

We can answer your questions about purchase agreements, types of construction contracts, professional services contracts. We can assist you in working with architects, engineers and contractors. We can offer insight into zoning and building codes, and working with building officials. We can help you better understand and prepare for a remodel, renovation or ground-up construction project.

Contact us if your assembly is considering a project. Let us answer questions that will help your assembly prepare for a building purchase or construction project. We are ready to help!



Stewards Foundation provided a loan as well as construction administration advice in assisting Lake Country Bible Chapel with the construction of their new facility



CORNERSTONE Magazine
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O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King and peace to all the earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray,
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

Phillips Brooks