

LAMPLIGHTER

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

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**Israel in Prophecy:
The Regathering of
the People**



Observations by the Editor

The Foremost American Art Form

During the 20th Century, the motion picture became the supreme American artistic expression. We literally flooded the world with our movies, and later came our television programs. We dominated the production of both movies and TV programs, and we led the way in developing all forms of new technology for both industries.

Like all inventions, both motion pictures and television have great potential for good and evil. In the early years of both, the potential for good prevailed. But in the latter half of the 20th Century, the potential for evil took over, and we became the moral polluter of planet Earth. Accordingly, as I traveled worldwide, I came to realize that if I turned on the TV set in my hotel room, I would be subjected to movies and television programs full of blasphemy, sex and violence — all courtesy of the so-called “Christian America.” It was disgusting.

In the early years of the motion picture industry, Hollywood would occasionally produce a Bible-based film, and when they did so, they normally treated their Bible source with respect. Cecil B. DeMille produced a silent film version of *The Ten Commandments* in 1923 and followed it in 1927 with *King of Kings*, a lavish, reverential life of Christ with a climactic resurrection scene in color. MGM’s 1926 silent-era *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*, was the most expensive film of its time.

Samson and Delilah was the top money-making film of 1949, and it sparked a “biblical film craze” during the 1950s. It was followed by two of 1951’s biggest box-office hits, *Quo Vadis* and *David and Bathsheba*. *The Robe* hit the screens in 1953, the first movie in CinemaScope. Then came Cecil B. DeMille’s blockbuster, *The Ten Commandments* (1956), followed by William Wyler’s production of *Ben Hur* (1959) — both of which starred Charlton Heston.

The cultural revolution of the 1960s put an end to Bible films — at least, films that were respectful of the Bible. *Jesus Christ Superstar* was produced in 1973. It



Dr. Reagan with Gary & Pam Fisher at the entrance to Capernaum in the Galilee of Israel. Gary heads up Lion of Judah Ministries in Franklin, Tennessee.

presented Jesus as a conflicted human being. The main song in the film stated over and over, “He’s a man, he’s just a man.” It ended with the crucifixion and no resurrection. Then came Martin Scorsese’s blasphemous film of 1988, *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

The biblical epics truly related to the Scriptures were revived by Mel Gibson in 2004 with his riveting film, *The Passion of the Christ*. The dialogue was entirely in reconstructed Aramaic and Latin with vernacular subtitles. The film was a major commercial hit, grossing in excess of \$600 million during its theatrical release, becoming the highest grossing R-rated film in U. S. history and the highest grossing non-English-language film of all time.

And now we have *The Bible* television series and the big budget movies, *Son of God* and *Noah*, both of which are reviewed in articles in this issue.

What is particularly encouraging is the fact that more and more movies of high quality — like *Final: The Rapture* and *God’s Not Dead* — are being produced by Christian film makers who have been successful in raising sufficient funds. Let’s hope this is a trend that will continue. ✚

The cover photo was provided by Quang-Tuan Luong at Terra Galleria Photography in San Jose, California (www.terragalleria.com). The photo was taken at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

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THE REGATHERING OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The Most Important Prophetic Development of the 20th Century

Dr. David R. Reagan

One of the greatest examples of God's continuing love for the Jewish people can be found in the most important prophetic development of the 20th Century.

When I think back on the 20th Century and all its amazing events, I am reminded of some words found in Habakkuk 1:5. They constitute a statement made by God to the prophet:

Look among the nations! Observe! Be astonished! Wonder! Because I am doing something in your days — You would not believe if you were told.

The 20th Century was full of momentous events that no one could have foreseen in 1900. Looking back on that century, what would you consider to be the most important event from a biblical perspective — particularly from the viewpoint of Bible prophecy?

World Wars I & II?

The Great Depression?

The advent of space travel?

The collapse of Communism?

The reunification of Europe?

The resurgence of Islam?

The answer from a biblical perspective is none of these events. The most important development of the 20th Century — more important than all of these events put together — was the worldwide regathering of the Jewish people to their homeland.

And lest you think I am exaggerating, let me prove it to you.

The Relevant Prophecies

There are many Bible prophecies concerning the regathering of the Jewish people in unbelief. In fact, their regathering in unbelief is the most prolific prophecy in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Let's take a look at three of the most important of those prophecies. The first is found in Jeremiah 16. It is mind-boggling. Read it carefully:

14) "Therefore behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when it will no longer be said, 'As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt,'

15) but, 'As the LORD lives, who brought up



Survivors of the Buchenwald Death Camp arrive in Haifa in July of 1945. (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

the sons of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them.' For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers."

This same prophecy is repeated verbatim in Jeremiah 23:7-8.

You cannot fully appreciate what is said in these verses unless you know something about Judaism. The one event that all Jews consider to be the greatest miracle in their history is the deliverance of their ancestors from Egyptian captivity under the leadership of Moses.

But this scripture passage asserts that a time will come when the Jews will look back on their history and proclaim that their regathering from the four corners of the earth — the event that began in the 1890s and continues to this day — was a greater miracle than their deliverance from Egyptian slavery. In other words The Regathering in the 20th Century will eclipse the Exodus!

This means that you and I are privileged to witness one of the greatest miracles of history. And yet, the average Christian has no appreciation for what is happening because he is ignorant of Bible prophecy and he has been taught that God is finished with the Jews. Therefore, the current regathering is simply viewed as an accident of history.

The second prophecy I want to bring to your attention is found in Isaiah 11:

10) Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples . . .

11) Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people, who will remain, from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

12) And He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Some have tried to debunk any modern application of this prophecy by claiming that it was fulfilled about 500 years before the time of Jesus by the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity. But that cannot be. The passage refers to a "second" regathering (the return from Babylon being the first). Further, it



Immigrant camp in 1949.

(Source: Israel National Photo Collection)

states this will be a regathering “from the islands of the sea,” which is a Hebrew colloquialism for the whole world, as is made clear in verse 12 where it states that the regathering will be “from the four corners of the earth.” Also, verse 12 says that “the banished ones” of both Israel and Judah will be regathered. The return from Babylon was a regathering of Jews from Judah.

The third prophecy is found in Ezekiel 37. This is the famous prophecy of the Valley of the Dry Bones. The prophet was placed in a valley full of bones and told to preach to them. As he did so, the bones began to come together, flesh grew back upon them and they came to life, becoming “an exceedingly great army” (Ezekiel 37:1-10). At that point, the Lord explained to Ezekiel what he was witnessing:

11) Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.’

12 “Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.’”

This is a symbolic prophecy. The dry bones represent the Jewish people in their end time dispersion, with no hope of ever existing again as a nation. The resurrection from their graves represents their regathering from the nations where they had been dispersed.

We can be assured of this interpretation because it is the one that God Himself provides later in the chapter:

21) “Say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;

22) and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms.’”

Again, those who are determined to argue that God has no purpose left for the Jewish people, attempt to invalidate these verses as an end time prophecy by arguing that they were fulfilled when the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity. But that simply cannot be.

The entire chapter has an end time context. It speaks of a regathering from “the nations,” and not just from Babylon (verse 21). It says this regathering will result in a union of Jews from both Israel and Judah (verse 19). And it says that following this regathering, the Jewish people will turn their hearts to God and will become “My people” (verse 23).

At verse 24, the chapter moves into the Millennial Reign of Jesus as it speaks of David (in his glorified body) once again becoming the king of the Jewish people. Further, it states that at that time, “the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel . . .” (verse 28).



Death Camp Escapees in 1944.

(Source: Israel National Photo Collection)

Herzl’s Vision

The fulfillment of these prophecies began in the late 19th Century through the efforts of a Hungarian Jew named Theodor Herzl (1860-1904). He was an intellectual who was serving as a Viennese journalist when the infamous Dreyfus Affair occurred in France.

Alfred Dreyfus (1859-1935) was a young French artillery officer who was Jewish. He was falsely accused of treason in 1894. This accusation occurred in the midst of a wave of anti-Semitism that had been generated by the publication of a book in 1886 titled, *Jewish France*.¹ The author, Edouard Drumont (1844-1917), was a virulent anti-Semite who attacked the role of Jews in France and argued for their exclusion from society.² The book became wildly popular and went through more than 150 printings before the end of the century.³

When the accusation of treason was levied against Dreyfus, the popular press jumped on the band wagon and decided to spotlight the case as proof of Drumont’s case against the Jews.

They proceeded to whip the general public into a frenzy.



Theodor Herzl

Herzl was sent to Paris to cover the trial for his newspaper. When he arrived, he was shocked by Parisians shouting, “Death to the Jews!”⁴ He suddenly experienced an epiphany in which he realized that the Jews had not been assimilated into European society, as he had assumed. Further, he realized they never would be. He sensed an even greater persecution to come.

This realization prompted Herzl to write a brief political booklet called *The Jewish State*, which was published in 1896.⁵ In it he called for the return of the Jews to their homeland and the creation of

their own state. He argued this would be the best cure to anti-Semitism. His most famous sentence in the book was, “If you will it, it is no dream.”

The booklet captured the imagination of Jews all over the world, and it produced the First Zionist Congress, which was held in Basel, Switzerland in 1897. During that conference, Herzl wrote in his diary that he expected the Jewish state to come into existence within 50 years.⁶ That statement proved to be prophetic when the United Nations voted 50 years later in 1947 to create a state for the Jewish people.

Another result of Herzl’s call for a Jewish homeland was a series of what the Jews called *aliyahs*.⁷ These were groups of Jews who decided to pull up stakes in Europe and move back to the land of Palestine, as it was called then, in order to pioneer the land and re-establish a strong Jewish presence.

Another response — a highly significant one — came at the end of World War I when the British government issued the Balfour Declaration in which the promise was made to make Palestine a homeland for the Jews.⁸

The Motivation to Return



New Immigrant in 1949.

Still, there was no great surge of Jews who returned to their homeland. The prospect of being a pioneer in the midst of a wilderness was not appealing enough to draw the Jews back home, despite the rising anti-Semitism they were experiencing.

World War I provided the land for the Jewish nation, but it would take World War II and the Holocaust to provide the motivation to return to the land.

The Jewish people came out of the Holocaust proclaiming, “Never

again! Never again! We are going to have our own land and our own state, and we are going to govern ourselves!”

In 1900 there were only 40,000 Jews in all of Palestine. By the end of World War II that number had ballooned to over 600,000.⁹



Immigrant Camp in 1991.

(Source: Israel National Photo Collection)

Major Surges of Immigration

The next great surges of immigration resulted from the 1956 Suez War and the 1967 Six Day War. After the Suez War, Egypt expelled almost all of its Jewish population. Following the Six Day War, the rest of the Arab world followed suit. As a result of these expulsions, almost 800,000 Jews were forcibly expelled from the Arab nations in the Middle East. In 1948 there were 851,000 Jews in the Arab nations of the Middle East. Thirty years later, in 1978, there were only 31,000 left.¹⁰

But the world’s largest Jewish population was unable to return to their homeland because they were held captive in the Soviet Union. The Russians hated the Jews, but they used them as whipping boys — blaming them for all their nation’s problems.

Nonetheless, there was a biblical prophecy that one day the Jews of Russia would be allowed to return to their homeland. It is found in Isaiah 43. The prophet quotes God as saying:

4) “Since you are precious in My sight,
Since you are honored and I love you . . .

5) Do not fear, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
And gather you from the west.

6) “I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’
And to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’
Bring My sons from afar and My daughters
from the ends of the earth . . .

Notice that this prophecy says the Jews will come freely from the east and the west, but the world will have to demand that those in the north be released. All directions in the Bible are given from Jerusalem. The uttermost part of the north would be the nation of Russia today. Note also that the prophecy says that the world will have to say to the south, “Do not hold them back.” We will see in a moment what that refers to.

But first, let's take a look at the north. In fulfillment of this prophecy, as the Soviet Russian empire began to crumble in the early 1990s, the world began to demand that the Russian Jews be allowed to return to Israel. And in 1990, the Russian premier, Mikhail Gorbachev, suddenly opened the door of the Soviet Union.

The result was a flood of refugees into Israel. During the next two years, almost 400,000 Russian Jews arrived in Israel, averaging over 16,600 a month.¹¹ It was equivalent to the United States today absorbing the entire 27 million population of Saudi Arabia during the same time period.

Amazingly, the refugees came knowing:

- They would have to abandon all valuables.
- They would face the necessity of learning Hebrew.
- They would have to live in minimal housing.
- They would face military service.
- They would find a non-existent job market.
- They would have to pay some of the highest taxes in the world.
- They would face the constant threat of terrorism and war.

They were fully aware of these stark realities because all of them had relatives living in Israel.

Yet, despite all these hardships, they came. Why? I believe they came, and are still coming, because God has placed in the hearts of the Jewish people the highway to Zion, and He has triggered the impulse for them to return home. Consider Psalm 84:5 — “How blessed is the man whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion!”

Operation Solomon

The largest Jewish population to the south of Jerusalem in the mid-20th Century consisted of the Black Jews of Ethiopia. No one knows for sure the origin of these Jews. The most common speculation is that they resulted from a union between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (2 Chronicles 9), but there is no biblical evidence of this. All we know for certain is that they existed in New Testament times because Acts chapter 8 contains the story of an Ethiopian Jew who came to Jerusalem



Operation Solomon
(Source: www.solveisraelsproblems.com)



This Israeli stamp was issued in 1968 to honor immigrants making aliyah. (Source: fotosearch.com)

to observe the feasts and who was converted to Christianity on his way back home to Africa by an evangelist named Philip.

In the late 1980s the Jews of Ethiopia began to feel a tug on their hearts to return to the Jewish homeland. In response, they started migrating to Addis Ababa by the thousands where they camped out around the international airport, demanding transportation to Israel. The government adamantly refused to let them leave, in fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 43:6 which states that the Jews in the south will be held back.

But in 1991, as the government began to crumble in the midst of a civil war, the United States and Israel intervened, providing bribes to military leaders. The government then relented and provided a 48 hour window of time for the refugees to depart.

The resulting airlift in May was amazing. In just under 36 hours, 14,500 Ethiopian Jews — nearly the entire Jewish population — was flown to Tel Aviv in 40 flights involving 35 aircraft. At one point there were 28 planes in the air at one time. And a world record was set when one El Al Boeing 747, designed to carry about 350 people, was loaded up with 1,086 passengers. This was possible because all the seats had been stripped out of the plane, the Ethiopians weighed very little, and they had no luggage. When that particular plane reached Tel Aviv, there was a total of 1,088 on board because two babies had been born en route!¹²



Students from the USA arrive in Tel Aviv in August 2007 to serve in the Israeli Armed Forces. They are either the children of Israeli citizens who live abroad or Jews in the Diaspora. The program is designed to encourage the students to make aliya and become residents and citizens of Israel. Their transportation was supplied by a non-profit organization called Nefesh B'Nefesh, meaning "Soul by Soul."

When I read about that development in the newspapers at the time, I immediately thought of a prophecy in Jeremiah 31:8 which reads as follows: "Behold, I am bringing them from the north country, and I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and she who is in labor with child, together; a great company, they will return here."

Today, over 6 million Jews — as many as were killed in the Holocaust — have been gathered back to their homeland, and they are still coming.

The Purpose

Why is God regathering the Jewish people after a dispersion lasting almost 2,000 years?

It's because He has promised that He will bring a remnant of the Jews to salvation before the consummation of history (Zech 12:10, Isaiah 10:20-23 and Romans 9:27).

The prophetic scriptures reveal that God has a specific plan for achieving that goal. He will regather them, and then He will bring all the nations of the world against them, allowing them to be hammered until they come to the end of themselves and turn to Him in repentance, accepting His Son as their Messiah. What a glorious day that will be! ☆

(Note: Reference notes can be found with the version of the article that is posted on our website at www.lamblion.com.)

The Saga of Exodus 1947

After World War II, The British, who controlled Palestine, decided to stop Jewish immigration by sending ships loaded with Jewish refugees back to their ports of embarkation in Europe. The first ship to which this policy was applied was the *Exodus 1947*.

The ship sailed from a port in France on July 11, 1947, with 4,515 immigrants, including 655 children, on board. On July 18, near the coast of Palestine a British destroyer rammed the ship and boarded it, while the immigrants put up a desperate defense. Two immigrants and a crewman were killed in the battle, and 30 were wounded. The ship was towed to Haifa, where the immigrants were loaded onto deportation ships bound for France. The French government refused to force them off the boat. Eventually, the British decided to return the would-be immigrants to Germany!

World public opinion was outraged, and the British changed their policy. Instead of sending immigrants back to Europe, they started re-settling them in detention camps in Cyprus.

The majority of the passengers on the *Exodus 1947* ultimately settled in Israel, though some had to wait until after the establishment of the State of Israel.

This incident was the basis of the 1958 novel by Leon Uris and the 1968 movie directed by Otto Preminger, both titled, *Exodus*. ☆

My Deliverance From Legalism

Ron Foster

(Editor's note: Ron Foster is a retired chemist who was one of the founding trustees of Lamb & Lion Ministries in 1980. He served as Chairman of the Board in 1984-1985. Today, he serves as a Trustee Emeritus and lives in Bayfield, Colorado with his wife, Pam, where he attends the First Baptist Church. The following article is extracted from a sermon he delivered at the church in April of 2013.)



For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one can boast — (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I suspect many people could stand here today and testify to the Lord's delivering them from an addiction — to drugs, to alcohol, to pornography, to gambling, or from various other traps that can enslave us. I am grateful I have not faced those things. But I can tell you about the Lord's redemptive work in my life regarding an addiction to something just as destructive, just as evil, just as difficult to break, and maybe more damaging eternally — namely, "legalistic religion."

Now, you may think "religion" is good; after all, don't we sing "Give me that old time religion"? And don't the Scriptures speak of "pure and undefiled religion"? It depends upon how you define the word. Are you talking about God's view or Man's?

The view of religion that prevails among most people consists of a long list of things to do that Man has devised or used over the centuries to try to repair his broken relationship with God. To some, it may be baptism or church attendance or teaching a class. To others, it may be visiting the sick or giving money to the church or other worthy causes. The list goes on and on. There is nothing at all wrong with any of these activities, and, in fact, the Lord calls us as His children and servants to do all of these things — and more.

But, the "rub" comes when a person begins to believe that he or she is earning God's favor in doing these things. There is a self-oriented sin nature within each of us that wants badly to be able to do something that will "help" God with our salvation. The heart of my message to you today is that there is nothing — absolutely nothing, zero — that you or I can do to earn, merit, or help God with our salvation. I repeat, **nothing!**

But, you may ask, "Don't we have to have faith?" Yes, of course. Without faith, it is impossible to please God; but even our faith is a gift and blessing from God, for which we cannot take credit. Look again at Ephesians 2:8-9 which is quoted at the beginning of this article. How would we even know about God if He had not chosen to reveal Himself to us through His Creation, the Word, and His Son Jesus Christ?

My Personal Experience

I grew up "going to church" with a solid base in the Bible, and I knew ABOUT Jesus, but I did not know Him. I never seemed able to live up to the life I was being called to live. As a result, I had a strong sense of guilt and dropped out in my early 20's. I left my children's spiritual teaching to my wife.

Through a series of events (coordinated by God), we wound up under the teaching of a man from my same background, but who knew and understood grace and non-sectarianism. It took two years for me to replace the faulty teaching of my youth with the truth from God's Word. I had tried to live by law, by being right, instead of trusting the One who is perfectly right.

It was scary for awhile. After all, I was giving up what all my authority figures had told me as a youngster. But, as I learned more and more, peace began to replace the guilt in my life, and I began to know Jesus as a real person who loved me and offered me eternal life as a free gift, just for trusting in Him. Today, I am confident of my salvation, and I can live life and even face death, without much concern — because it is all in His hands, not mine. Praise the glorious name of Jesus!

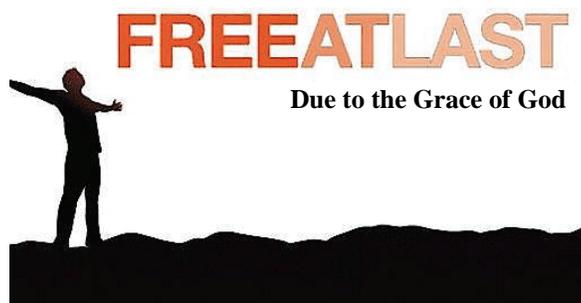
I cannot tell you how many times growing up in my boyhood church that I heard our preachers say, "God has done His part and is not going to do anymore; now you need to do your part." It was all about me. By the time I was 12, I knew our doctrine inside-out. We were taught the "Five Steps of the Plan of Salvation" (our plan, of course) and the "Five Identifying Marks of the One True Church" (our church, of course).

We had it all nailed down. Our goal seemed to be that we had to be "right" about everything. We thought we had all the truth; yet I never heard a word about the peace and personal security we have in Christ. Why not? Because our security was not in Christ, but in ourselves and our doctrinal correctness.

One thing I have since learned is that we are not saved by being "right," anymore than we are by being "good." Yes, all truth is important — vitally important. Truth is the very nature of God. We should strive to be as right as possible in the way we handle and interpret God's Word. But — listen to me —

although all truth is important, it is not equally important.

What do I mean by that? Well, for example, it is true that Methusaleh lived to be 969 years old because the Bible says so. But that truth doesn't begin to compare with the truth that God came to Earth as a man and died on a cross to pay the required price for our sins — yours and mine. In short, I have learned that we are saved by faith in a Man, not faith in a plan.



(Source: www.radical.net)

By my mid-teens, I had developed an image of being in “partnership” with Jesus in securing my salvation. Now, think about that. If there is anything that you or I could do to help with our salvation, God could have just said, “Try a little harder, and Jesus will not have to die.” But there was no other way. You will recall that Jesus Himself asked the Father if there couldn’t be another way; but the answer was “No.” So Jesus replied, “Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done.”

Another thing, if we can help with our salvation, it says to Jesus that His sacrifice was not enough. Imagine standing at the foot of the cross and saying, “Jesus, I really appreciate what You are doing for me; but it is not quite enough. You still need my help.” That is as much heresy as it is absurd. If His work at Calvary was not fully adequate to satisfy the Father, we are all in very serious trouble.

I suggest to you that His work was enough and is enough today to buy our redemption from sin. As the song says, “It’s in Christ and Christ alone that we have hope” — hope for today, hope for tomorrow, and hope for the future. I would remind you that biblical hope is not a “wish,” like “I hope the Broncos win their next game” or “I hope it rains tomorrow.” Biblical hope is a solid reality — as solid as the existence of God Himself.

That’s enough about me and my past, I’d like to share with you six examples from the Bible that helped open my mind to this truth of “salvation by grace through faith,” and a good place to start with any issue is at the beginning — with Genesis.

Adam and Eve

You know the Garden story. Eve was deceived by the serpent when he caused her to doubt God’s Word. Genesis 3:6 tells us that Adam was there. He witnessed what was happening, then willfully and knowingly participated in her sin. Eve was deceived and sinned, but Adam bore the greater responsibility.

When God confronted them in the Garden, they had clothed themselves with fig leaves to hide their nakedness because they had come to know sin. God could easily and rightfully have told them to take off the fig leaves and put on animal skins, but He didn’t do that. Read it closely. Genesis 3:21 tells us God made the garments and “clothed them.” The animal skins required the shedding of blood, and that was an obvious foreshadowing of the sacrifice of our future Redeemer.

I suspect God killed those animals in the presence of Adam and Eve. Until this moment, there had been no death and He wanted them to see the horror of what they had done. They tried to cover their sin, but God would not allow them to do so.

In clothing them, He did the work necessary to put them back into a right relationship with Him, symbolized in those animal skins. He did so in a loving and caring way— by grace — because of who He is, not who we are, and we should be grateful for that.

“All truth is important, but all truth is not equally important.”

Noah

Ten generations and about 1650 years later, man had become totally corrupt. Genesis 6:5 says his mind was on evil all the time; but there was a man named Noah who “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:8). That is the first mention of “grace” in the Bible.

Now let me ask you: If Noah lived in a time far more wicked than we do today, where did he get his faith? The New Testament tells us that “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17). But there was no written scripture at that time; so, again, where did Noah get his faith?

Do you recall Seth? As far as we know, he was Adam and Eve’s third son. Well, this caught me by surprise: Noah was 34 years old when Seth (his great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather) died. Do you think maybe Seth told each successive generation the story of his father and mother in the Garden of Eden and God’s grace in redeeming them?

God had not yet called Noah to build the ark; so we have no scriptural indication of any good works on his part, just that he had “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” — obviously by his faith in God that had been passed down from the earliest Patriarchs.

Abraham

Later, about 2000 BC, on God’s direction, a man named Abraham took his only son, Isaac, and was about to sacrifice him when an angel stopped his hand. He was shown a ram caught by his horns in a nearby thicket, once again showing the concept of a substitutionary sacrifice. The place was called “Jehovah Jireh”, meaning “the Lord who provides.” Can you imagine the confusion in Abraham’s mind when God told him to sacrifice his only son, the son that was born to him and Sarah when they were past childbearing age?

Note Genesis 22:5 where Abraham told his two servants that “the lad and I will go yonder and worship and return to you.” Isn’t that interesting? Abraham was totally committed to the sacrifice of Isaac; in his mind, it was already done. Yet, he said “we” will return to you. That was how confident he was that God would somehow make it right. Why? So that God’s covenant (Genesis 12:2-3) with Abraham could be fulfilled.

We are told that Abraham’s righteousness (his right standing before God) was imputed to him by his faith. Just like you and me, Abraham had no righteousness of his own. The same applies to us today. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to us by our faith in His supreme sacrifice. In other words, Abraham’s son could not bring salvation; but God’s Son could because He was (and is) the Perfect Lamb of God.

Moses

About 1500 BC, a man named Moses was assigned by God to lead the Israelites out of their bondage in Egypt. You will read in Exodus 13-14 that when they got into the wilderness, God was



(Source: <http://pinegrovecommunitychurch.com>)

the one leading the people. Well, He led them into a box canyon between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army.

When the people realized their "impossible" situation, some of them began to whine and complain to Moses that they should have stayed in Egypt rather than be taken into the wilderness to die. Do you remember what Moses did and said next? Moses held out his hand and said, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today . . . the Lord will fight for you while you keep silent" (Exodus 14:13-14).

Question: What did he mean by, "Stand still"? What else could they do? There was no place to run. They had no weapons with which to fight against an army of horses, chariots, and swords. I believe "stand still" meant to do just what it said — do nothing but step back and watch God do His mighty work.

Isaiah

Moving on, about 740 BC, we meet a man named Isaiah who became a great prophet of God. We are told in Isaiah 6 that he saw God "high and lifted up and His train filled the temple."

Those of you who have been through "The Truth Project" may recall that three things happen when a person gets just a small glimpse of the Lord. They happened to Isaiah. He saw his sin, he saw the sin of his culture, and he felt a need to respond — and he did so when he said, "Here am I, Lord, send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

Do you remember how God "cured" his sin as symbolized by his "unclean lips"? A seraphim (an angelic being) flew to the altar, took a hot coal, and touched it to Isaiah's lips. Question: Just as with Adam and Eve, why didn't God tell Isaiah to go get the coal himself? Only God could solve the problem, so God did the work that was necessary to make it happen.

Jesus

My sixth example of God's grace is certainly the premier example of all time. When Jesus' work on the cross was done, He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). My knowledge of the original language is near zero, but I am told the Greek word used here, *telestai*, was the same word that courts used when a case was settled or when a person's time in jail was over — when their debt had been paid. That word was stamped on their legal documents. It meant "Paid in Full."

In saying this, I believe Jesus was closing the door on any possibility that man could improve upon (or add to) what He had just done. It was indeed finished. Paid in full, for that time, today and forever. Rome did not kill Jesus. The Jewish leaders did not kill Jesus. The people did not kill Jesus. God the Father put Jesus on the cross from the foundation of the world as the only way that you and I could ever have a relationship with Him (Revelation 13:8).



God's greatest example of grace.

Our Works vs. God's Grace

Hopefully, you have seen in these six examples that there is no place for human merit or accomplishment in repairing our broken condition with God. Yes, we have been saved to do "good works" (Titus 2:14), but there is no hope for salvation in man's efforts to please God. He said that "our righteousness is as filthy rags" in His sight (Isaiah 64:6).

Think about that. Our righteousness — the very best we can do — is despicable in God's eyes if we try to use it to merit His favor.

The only thing in which He takes pleasure is when we recognize our sin, acknowledge Jesus as the solution, and we choose to put our faith and trust in Him. Let me be blunt — it's not about you, it's not about me, and it's not about what we can do; it's all about Jesus Christ and what He did for us at Calvary, nothing more and nothing less.

No church dogma can save you; no plan can save you; no pastor or priest can save you; no good works can save you. Despite what the world may tell you about "tolerance," Jesus is the One and Only way to the Father. That's not my opinion; He said it of Himself (John 14:6). So did Peter in Acts 4:12.

Threefold Salvation by Grace Through Faith

Our salvation has three aspects: justification, sanctification, and glorification. We are justified when we place our trust in Christ alone. We will be glorified at the time of our resurrection — that is, we will be given new, incorruptible and immortal bodies. Between our justification and glorification, we live the Christian life during which we are being sanctified, meaning that we are being shaped more and more into the likeness of our Lord.

If we are justified by faith and glorified by faith, does it not stand to reason that we are to be sanctified by faith? Yet I have heard people (including me) say, "I'm trying to be a good Christian." Again, the sin nature within us wants to make us believe that we can become "better Christians" by our own efforts. You just as well give it up; it cannot be done.

To want to be a better servant of God is a noble goal; but you can no more sanctify yourself than you can justify yourself or glorify yourself. Paul tells the Galatians in 3:3 that they are foolish if they begin by the Spirit, then live by the flesh. Sanctification comes when you rest in the assurance that God loves you and forgives you, you trust in the Holy Spirit God has given you, you feed the Spirit with God's Word, and He will make you into what He wants you to be.

In 2 Corinthians 5:21 we are told that God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." When you trust in Christ, God removes your sin and gives you His righteousness. Salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone — that is easily the best deal in the history of this planet. Don't pass it by. ❖

Why Christians Should Support Bible Movies

Nathan E. Jones



During the icy weekend of February 28, 2014, my three middle-school aged children and I braved the latest snow storm to attend the opening weekend of the newest Bible-themed movie, *Son of God* (an excerpt really from the television series *The Bible*). Munching through our refillable tub of popcorn and sucking down our blue slurpees, we reveled in the movie theater experience.

This was a super-rare outing because it had been 7-8 years since the last Bible-themed movie, *The Nativity*, was released. Going to the theaters these days revolves around grown men wearing tights or giant alien robots duking it out, so seeing a movie about Jesus Christ on the big screen is an especially rare treat for us, and in scope, for the whole world.

A Positive Recommendation

Afterwards, we slipped back down the snowy roads and fortunately returned home with our vehicle unscathed. I then proceeded to post on Facebook that we'd seen the movie and thought it was pretty good, and so recommended my Facebook friends go see it as well.

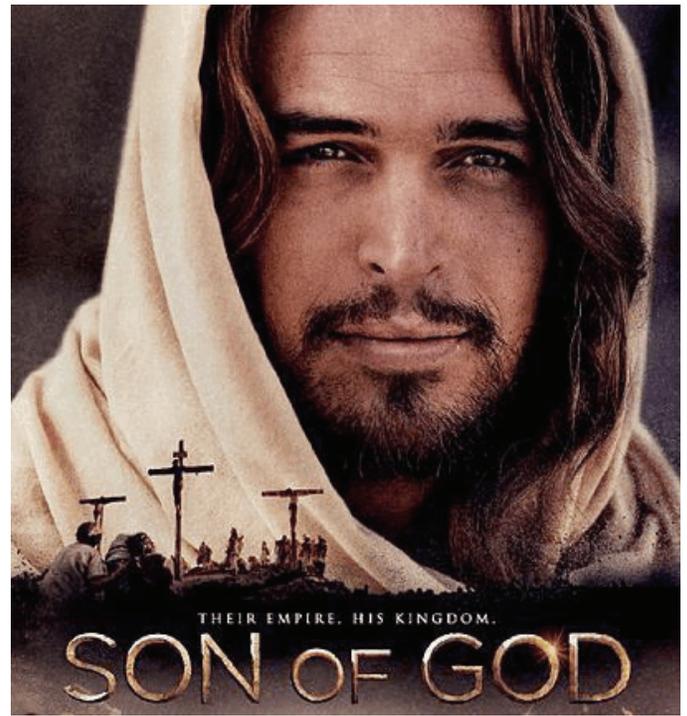
What I wasn't prepared for was the second snow storm that was unleashed in all its blistering flurry by this innocent post; a storm I didn't make it through quite so unscathed. The second storm wasn't a storm by weather, though it was both chilly and super-heated at the same time, but a storm of negative reaction bordering on tempest fury.

The Negative Responses

Did the severely negative reactions to my seemingly innocent post come from the God-haters who despise the very idea that there's a God who controls the universe? Nope, they seem to be totally unaware that the movie is even out. How about those protectors of the innocent who defend the children from too much television violence, such as one would naturally see during the crucifixion scene? Nope, they were all spent back when *The Passion of the Christ* came out years ago.

So, who hates the *Son of God* with the anger of a thousand blazing, burning suns? Why, it's the Evangelical Christians, especially those faithful who personally title themselves "Watchmen on the Walls."

Needless to say, I was shocked by their negative reactions. Maybe it was the vitriol, but mostly to my utter dismay, it was because 99% of them hadn't even seen the movie, nor ever planned on seeing it. They hated it because they heard that somebody's sister's brother's cousin, three times removed, blogged it was (and here comes that magic catch-all phrase so popular with Evangelicals today) — "apostate."



The phrases "spiritual poison," "outright dangerous," "spiritually corrupt," "idolatrous," "the fake Jesus," "New Age Jesus" and "burn the witch" (no, wait, wrong movie) were the stones also thrown at this supposed cinematic adulteress.

Not being an advocate at all of anything apostate to the Christian faith nor wishing to be slipping down any icy roads doctrinally, I had to make sure I understood that word correctly. Since it's been a few years for me since Bible school and seminary, maybe I didn't quite remember what that word means. So, I turned to the trusty Dictionary.com and to my relief found the definition remains the same as it always has been — "a total desertion of or departure from one's religion, principles, party, cause, etc."

The movie *Son of God* is supposedly a total departure from the Christian faith? How so? Puzzled, I went looking into the reasons why these staunch defenders-of-the-faith were giving this movie such an adamant "thumbs down" with the "apostate" label that would put it in the same category as Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*, and Paul Middleditch's *Rapture-Palooza*.

"Apostate" Reasons

Okay, here are some of the arguments detractors have made for why the movie *Son of God* is supposedly apostate and Christians should tell the movie-watching world, "Just say no."

1. Jesus is too handsome.

Ah, yes, it appears only ugly actors should be cast into the part of Jesus. Portuguese hunk Diogo Morgado and *Person of Interest* star Jim Caviezel need not audition. Isaiah 53:2 did prophesy that the Christ of the First Coming would be homely: "He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him." And yet, the Christ of the Second Coming in Revelation 1:12-18 portrays Jesus in all His majesty as white-haired with blazing eyes like fire. Finding someone to cast who looks like the latter would be hard to come by, so

Hollywood chose somewhere in between. Small blessings, for at least Hollywood didn't cast someone like Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson!

2. Mary Magdalene was like a 13th Apostle.

Having a woman follow Jesus around seemed to be cutting into the authority of the Twelve Apostles. Who does she think she is? Oh, right, she's one of the women of Mark 15:40-41 who along with Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome "followed Him [Jesus] and cared for His needs." Jesus didn't have a money-earning job during His ministry time, and His apostles had all abandoned their careers to follow Him. Who paid for their food and clothing and, like mothers, took care of these men? It was these and other women who traveled with them the whole time.

3. The story was from the Apostle John's perspective.

John began the movie as an old man on the Isle of Patmos telling the story of his time following Jesus, just as Revelation 1:9 explains. The problem? The last I looked, the Gospel of John was the fourth of four Gospels. He also wrote First, Second and Third John, and Jesus dictated to him the book of Revelation. So, there shouldn't be any problem with John telling the story. Oh, but Jesus was there with John on the island at the end of the story; that's the problem. No, it's not, not according to Revelation 1:1. Who is that "angel" who showed John the future? Check out Revelation 1:12-18 again. Why, it's Jesus, standing right there with John!

4. Andrew wasn't in the boat with Jesus.

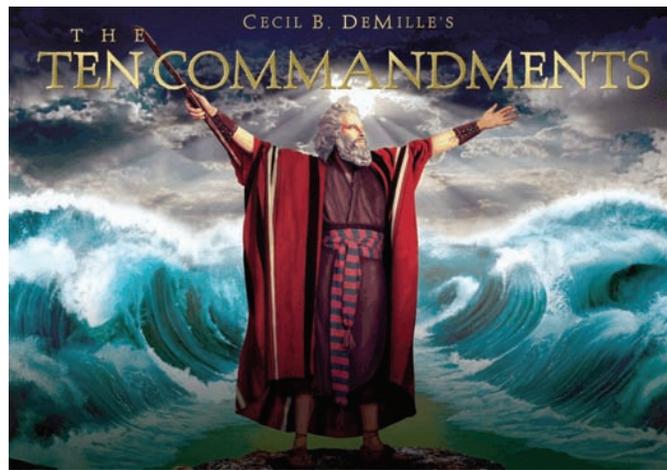
In the movie, when Jesus first meets Peter, Andrew is missing. How inaccurate! After all, Matthew 4 and Mark 1 say that when Jesus selected His disciples, He first called both Peter and Andrew, and then soon after, James and John.

No, wait, there's John's account. According to him, Andrew had met Jesus first and then brought his brother Simon along later to meet Jesus, whereby Jesus renames him Cephas or Peter. Then there's also a fourth account in Luke 5. There Jesus hops into Peter's boat and has him sail just off the shore so Jesus can preach to the people. Jesus then performs the miracle of bringing in a big haul of fish into Peter's net.

So we have three different seemingly conflicting accounts from four different points of view? Not really. It is likely that Andrew took Peter to meet Jesus and then a day or so later Jesus came by their boat, performed the fishing miracle, and then called the two sets of brothers to follow Him. If the Apostles are not considered apostate for prioritizing differently certain aspects of the story, I can cut the movie some slack for leaving Andrew out of the boat. After all, we see Andrew along with the other Apostles later.

5. Jesus wanted to change the world.

Being called into service by Jesus, Peter then asks Him what He plans on doing. Just like the Gospel accounts, Jesus replies, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." The



(Source: <http://nixpixmoviereviewsandmore.blogspot.com>)

movie then breaks into a ten minute exposition of what exactly that odd statement means with all the theological implications in mission-ology, personal evangelism, and kingdom building.

Oh, no wait, it doesn't! It only has a limited amount of time, so Jesus instead sums it all up by saying He wants to "change the world." Considering the facts that Jesus died to provide salvation, that Christianity has become the world's largest religion, and that Christ's spiritual kingdom continues to march on, then "change the world"

is exactly what He did.

6. Jesus kissed Lazarus' head in the tomb.

John 11 gives us the account of Jesus raising Lazarus back from the dead, and in the *Son of God* movie, Jesus is portrayed as performing this great miracle when He goes into the tomb and kisses Lazarus on the head. But in the Gospel of John, did Jesus go into the tomb and physically touch Lazarus? No, not that we're told. In the movie, was Lazarus clothed in the proper burial wraps? No, his head was not wrapped, as it should have been.

And why not? Probably because the director wanted us to experience Jesus' sadness and love for His friend and to witness the look of life returning to Lazarus' face. Not totally accurate to the biblical narrative, but a creative liberty that made me only appreciate the power and love of Jesus from the Gospel account even more.

7. This is Roma Downey's Jesus, not mine.

Son of God is the brainchild of *Touched by an Angel* star Roma Downey and her husband Mark Burnett. Downey, it is said, "is a well-known Catholic." Downey, it is said, "is a well-known New Ager." Downey, it is said, "is a . . ." The list goes on and on from those who despise her and her movies. Well, which is it? Is she a Catholic, a New Ager, a Catholic New Ager, a New Age Catholic? True, Downey did have her picture taken with Oprah. Hmm, I had my picture taken with Al Gore. Does that make me a tree-hugging global warming enthusiast?

There is enough evidence from television and magazine interviews which supports that Downey is indeed a Catholic. I'll be the first to claim that Catholicism is cultic in nature, though I've known genuinely saved people who have stayed in Catholicism because they like its liturgy. Though I can only find third-hand reports, she's supposedly also explored New Age teachings in her spiritual journey, a dead end I heartily tell Christians to avoid. Clearly and without a doubt, in her past she's gotten into some pretty messed up theology, and I certainly won't apologize for that. My hands are wiped clean — closed and shut case. Let's move on. I can only speak for her views of today based on her current works, such as *The Bible* and *Son of God*.

Downey's background is enough to make Evangelicals walk away and treat her as if a leper, which is exactly what they have done. But, do her odd views translate over into *Son of God*? Being a spiritual discernor for 40 years, I don't believe so. I'm reminded of Mel Gibson, who also like Downey is a Catholic

and on top of it an avid anti-Semite, and yet he produced the highly acclaimed and doctrinally sound *The Passion of the Christ*. Whatever church practices she engages in that an Evangelical Christian would never participate in didn't translate over into the movie. Praise God, for He was in sovereign control.

The accusation "not my Jesus" is a very telling argument on behalf of detractors, though not in the way they might think. The problem is, we all have our own Jesus. "Not me!" you proclaim. Well, read 1 Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." None of us, I repeat — none of us — have a clear picture of the genuine Jesus. What's told us about Jesus in the Bible is as close as we've got, but reread 1 Corinthians 13:12. We do not have the full, clear picture of who Jesus is. People fill in the gaps by emphasizing a characteristic of Jesus they find most appealing. Some focus too much on Jesus' love, some on His mercy, and some on His wrath. Nobody has the bona fide, all encompassing understanding of the real Jesus, a concept beyond our comprehension since He is God. Someday we will, though, praise the Lord! But, not in this life.

So, let him who thinks he has the full understanding of who Jesus is throw the first stone at Roma Downey.

8. There were parts left out.

Is *Son of God* a word-for-word account of the Gospel of John? Definitely not. It was told in a story format. That means that some events and teachings were emphasized while others were cut or left out completely. And, by using stories like Jesus loved to utilize, the audience could relate better. For a word-for-word rendition of Jesus' life, I highly recommend *The Jesus Film* produced in 1979 by Campus Crusade for Christ.

Where I thought the cut was unfortunate was when Jesus made the amazing statement three times in the movie from John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life" but didn't proceed with the rest of the verse, "no one comes to the Father except through Me." Though the second part of the verse is vital to our understanding that Jesus alone provides salvation, when you think about it, the first part three times uses the word "the" and not the erroneous "a." Therefore, the movie didn't veer at all towards Universalism as some have erroneously claimed, but went out of its way to say that Jesus is the only way to Heaven. Kudos!

There are other complaints people have with the movie. It is, after all, a movie. Who hasn't found fault with Charlton Heston's *The Ten Commandments* or the animated movie, *Prince of Egypt*?

The Main Issue

A blogger named "The Last Hiker" probably summed it up best about why well-meaning Christians are practically terrified of the movie *Son of God*:

What if millions of people walk away from this film with a false understanding of Jesus Christ?

And what if the Church doesn't notice this as much because we are already so familiar with Jesus, that we may subconsciously fill in the gaps of the story, but the unchurched cannot do that. They don't have the prior reference to be able to do that.

But what if millions of people who would never come in contact whatsoever with the Gospel message watch the movie and are led to read the Bible and become saved?

"Nothing gained is nothing lost" just doesn't work when it comes to evangelism.

What if people come away with not a convoluted view, but actually their first view of Jesus, where they never have had one before? (Which by the way, from this movie they will not receive a convoluted view.)

As I was sitting in the theater, a teenage girl behind me said something marvelous. She said, "How wonderful the movie ends with Jesus' promise to return. Jesus is coming back! I didn't know that." Folks, too many people already have a convoluted view of Jesus, and likely we fit in there somewhere as well. This movie actually helps fix that problem.

People, these movies open a door that enables us to share, correct, exhort, and encourage concerning the various points of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. After all, isn't that what the Church is called to do?

Exhortation

It just floors me to read the vitriol spewed by "watchmen" over *Son of God*. We are mad that Hollywood doesn't produce "Christian" movies, and when they do, our expectations are so highly off-the-chart that we decry those very same movies and tell Christians not to go see them, whereby due to loss of revenue Hollywood stops making

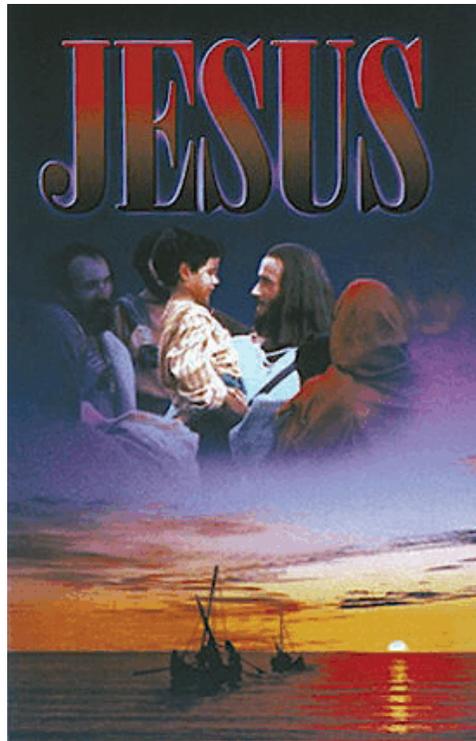
them.

Bang! We've shot ourselves in the foot.

Instead, I encourage everyone to go see the movies, and then discuss them with others so they can learn to discern biblical truths. We're not spiritual babies who have to be sheltered. By restraining them from attending, your loving protection is only hurting people's eternal souls. Ironic, isn't it?

Sure, we live in scary times with genuine apostasy running amok, but you cannot hide in your bunkers. Throw those doors wide open and get on out of there! There's a secular world out there and we have to live in it for there to be an effective witness for Jesus Christ. God gave us this opportunity with the movie *Son of God*. So, go see it and then use it to witness your faith. ❖

Nathan Jones is the Lamb & Lion Web Minister and Associate Evangelist. He is available for speaking engagements.



The Jesus Film, by Campus Crusade.

Scripture Related Movies

Dr. David R. Reagan

The overwhelming success of the TV series, *The Bible*, which was featured on the History Channel in March of 2013, seems to have prompted Hollywood to wake up and take notice of the fact that there are millions of people who are interested in Bible related movies and TV programs. The series drew the largest cable TV audience in history — more than 13 million viewers, with a cumulative total of more than 100 million.

NBC has already contracted to finance a sequel that will take the story of Christianity through the end of the book of Acts and even beyond that. It is tentatively titled, “AD: Beyond the Bible.”

Son of God

20th Century Fox decided to get on the bandwagon by distributing a portion of *The Bible* series as a major motion picture titled, *Son of God*. I saw the film, and I was greatly impressed by it. Some Christian critics cut the film to pieces with arguments that were petty to the point of being silly, as you will see when you read Nathan Jones’ excellent article that begins on page 11.

One thing I loved about the movie, that I did not see any critic mention, was its title. Think about it. “Son of God” is a title of deity. It affirms that Jesus was who He said He was — namely, God in the flesh. That title is blasphemous to Jews and downright horrendous to Muslims, but the movie’s producers did not give in to the pressure of political correctness. Also, in the movie, Jesus states three times that He is the only way to God. Christians should be celebrating the film rather than throwing rocks at it.



Noah

The second biblical epic of the year, *Noah*, is a better candidate for stoning. It was about 20% Bible and 80% imagination — *vivid* imagination!

The first half of the film came across to me like a Sci-Fi movie. It featured weird creatures called “Watchers.” They served as protectors of Noah and his family, and they helped Noah build the Ark. These creatures, who supposedly are fallen angels, were presented as modern-day Hollywood transformers who could transform themselves from a pile of rocks into 20 foot tall fiendish monsters. I guess they were based on the biblical reference to Nephilim living on the earth at the time of Noah (fallen angels who manifested themselves as giants — see Genesis 6:4 and Numbers 13:33).

What I was never able to figure out is why fallen angels would want to help Noah!

The other strange aspect of the movie was Noah’s revelation to his family in the midst of their voyage that he felt it was God’s will for all of them to commit suicide when they landed so that

the sin of Man would never again corrupt nature. Needless to say, this insane idea caused Noah’s family to rebel against him. I suppose this concept was introduced to provide dramatic effect to offset what otherwise would be a boring cruise.

But despite all this nonsense, the film had some redeeming virtues. There was no filthy language or torrid sex scenes. It clearly differentiated good from evil. It related the reason for the flood to the sinful rebellion of Mankind. The flood itself was pictured as a worldwide deluge, in stark contrast to the currently popular idea that it was only a regional flood.

Some have criticized the movie for never mentioning the word, God. That criticism is invalid. God is spoken about constantly, but He is called “The Creator.” And I liked that term of reference since we live in a time when even thinking about a Creator God is considered ridiculous.

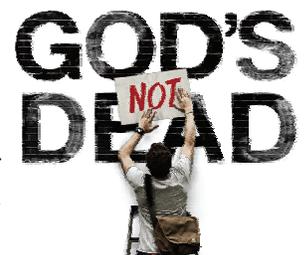
One of my favorite parts of the movie was when Noah is portrayed sitting down with his family in the midst of their voyage to tell them the story of Creation. It is told just as it is related in the first chapter of Genesis.

My favorite part of the film is when Noah disguises himself and walks through the camp of his besiegers the night before the flood begins. He witnesses debauchery that simply overwhelms him and impresses upon him God’s justice in sending the flood.

But what happened next prompted me to want to stand up and shout, “Hallelujah!” Noah goes back to the Ark and shares with his wife what he saw. She is repulsed, and Noah responds by observing that the same potential for debauchery resides in the two of them and in all of Mankind. I could hardly believe what I was seeing and hearing on the screen — a Hollywood denial of the essence of Humanism! The basic religion of Satan has always been Humanism, and it is the religion of Hollywood. Humanism teaches that Man is basically good and capable of perfection. The Bible teaches that Man is basically evil and can be changed only by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. *Noah* affirms the biblical view.

God’s Not Dead

A few days after seeing *Noah*, a friend called and said I needed to see a film titled, *God’s Not Dead*. I had not heard about it. I checked the Internet and found that it was being shown at only a handful of theaters in the Dallas area. Then a few days later, when I checked again to see the show times, I discovered it had spread to theaters all over Dallas.



I went to see the movie on a Saturday morning at 11am, and the theater was packed! I quickly discovered why. It turned out to be the best Christian movie I have ever seen. It is outstanding in every respect — strong acting, excellent directing, and a compelling story that is true to God’s Word. As we say here in Texas, “I got my socks blessed off.” That’s all I am going to say about it, because I don’t want to spoil it for you. If it is no longer in the theaters when you read this article, then order a copy from Netflix or some other video provider. Incidentally, this movie was funded by the Duck Dynasty. ❖

Are Gay Rights Civil Rights?

Bob Russell



The liberal media seems obsessed with promoting gay rights. In recent weeks we've been inundated with news features about the first openly gay professional basketball and football players, the 34 same-sex couples married at the Grammys and the Arizona governor's decision to veto a law that allowed business owners to refuse service to gays and lesbians on the grounds of religious conviction. This past week the big story locally was a federal judge's ruling that gay marriages performed out of state must be recognized as valid in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. On and on it goes.

We were once told that what people did in their own bedrooms should be a private matter, now it's front-page news and advocates demand public approval. Frequently the pro-homosexual decisions are labeled as "advances" in the battle for gay rights. Kentucky's Attorney General refused to appeal the federal judge's ruling saying, "I came to the inescapable conclusion that I would be defending discrimination." An editorial lauded that decision as, "Bold."

I can understand why the 3-5% of society who practice homosexuality celebrate each decision in their favor, but why are the media and the entertainment industry so consumed with the approval of homosexuality?

A Wrongful Equation

The obvious reason is that the gay agenda is wrongfully equated with civil rights. Progressives regard the issue as comparable to the African American battle for equality in the 1950s and 60s. Liberals want to be compassionate and to come down on the right side of history. They conclude those of us who stand for the traditional family are as backward and bigoted as the prejudiced southerners who opposed racial integration a half century ago.

I am of the conviction that homosexuality is not a civil rights issue at all. It is a behavioral issue. To have sex with someone of the same gender is an individual choice. It is not a distinctive like

race, which is a God-given feature that cannot be denied.

The Bible teaches that every person inherits the sin nature of Adam. We all have carnal temptations that need to be restrained. Some have an innate inclination to temper, others to obesity and others desire relationships with a multiplicity of partners. There's little doubt that some have same-sex attractions from youth. But for 6000 years of recorded history, every civilized society has encouraged any who are tempted in those areas to practice self-denial. The Bible urges us to "abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11).

Smokers have that message preached to them daily. No matter how much a smoker craves nicotine, society demands they resist their desires and not contaminate public places with second-hand smoke. Their behavior is heavily taxed and is unlawful in many establishments. It's not hateful to discriminate against smokers, but reasonable and compassionate to do so.

Clergy who have abused children are not given a free pass because they have an innate desire for sex with minors. All agree the offenders should be held accountable for not denying their impulses and putting the well being of others ahead of self.

There is now a nationwide crusade to train children to deny their desire for sweets and comfort food. We are told that to refuse to serve soft drinks and candy bars at school is not denying teens their civil rights; it's encouraging disciplined behavior that results in better health.

The Solution

To those who struggle with same-sex attractions the solution is not endorsement of a behavior that shortens life spans, transmits diseases and offends the basic values of a large portion of society. The solution is to encourage abstinence. Or, at the very least, to keep what is done in the bedroom a private matter and not demand society celebrate it as healthy behavior.

If gay marriage is a civil rights issue then the liberal media and activists judges are right in favoring it. On the other hand, if homosexuality is an individual choice to participate in immoral behavior, those who promote it are expediting the disintegration of the family, paving the way for a national collapse and inviting the wrath of God.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:7-8) ❖

Editor's note: In 1966, at age 22, Bob Russell became pastor of Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. He retired from that position in 2006. During that 40 years, the church grew from 120 to over 18,000, becoming one of the largest churches in America. Today, it is averaging over 22,000 in attendance each week, making it the 5th largest church in the nation. Since his "retirement," Bob spends his time writing, teaching and preaching under the auspices of Bob Russell Ministries (www.bobrussellministries.com).

Multiplying Our Outreach

Dr. David R. Reagan

We continue adding new outlets for our television program, "Christ in Prophecy." Below is a summary of all the places where you can access our program:

National Networks:

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

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

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

GEB (Golden Eagle Broadcasting) — Tue. 6:00pm CT, DirecTV 363 & Web Streaming (gebamerica.com).

TCT (Total Christian Television) — Sun. 6:00pm CT, DirecTV 377, Cable, & Web Streaming (tct.tv).

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

CTVN (Cornerstone TV Network) — Sun. 8:00pm CT, Flagship Station in Pittsburgh, PA, 113 Affiliated Stations, Glorystar Satellite, & Web Streaming (ctvn.org).

CTN (Christian TV Network) — Mon. 5:00pm CT, DirecTV 376, DISH 267, Glorystar and Thaicom 5 Satellites, & Web Streaming (ctnonline.com).

Regional Networks:

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

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

KTLN (Total Living Network) — Sun. 6:30pm PT, Broadcast Station in San Francisco (Channel 25) & Web Streaming (ktln.tv).

VTN (Victory TV) — Sat. 6:00pm CT, Three Broadcast Stations in Arkansas, Cable, DirecTV & DISH Local 25.

KVBA (Vision Broadcasting) — Thrs. 8:30pm MT, Broadcast Station in Alamogordo, NM & Web Streaming (kvbatv.com).

Internet Networks:

HisChannel — Sun. 9:30pm CT, Sat. 8:00am, Wed. 9:30am, Live Broadcast Plus Archiving of Programs for On Demand Access (HisChannel.com).

LightSource — Anytime. Streaming of Programs on Demand (lightsource.com).

YouTube — Anytime. Streaming of Programs on Demand (youtube.com/user/ChristinProphecy).

Vimeo — Anytime. Streaming of Programs on Demand (vimeo.com).

GodTube — Anytime. Streaming of Programs on Demand (godtube.com).

GodTV — Anytime. Streaming of Programs on Demand (via LightSource.com).

DailyMotion — Anytime. Streaming of Programs on Demand. European equivalent of YouTube (dailymotion.com/us).

Lamb & Lion Ministries — Anytime. Streaming of Programs on Demand (lamblion.com).

Other Outlets:

i-Tunes — Anytime. Streaming of Audio Only.



We recently interviewed Jim Fletcher, a recognized expert on Israel and the Middle East. Jim's ministry is called "Prophecy Matters." You can find it on the Internet at www.prophecymatters.com.

As we continue to expand our outreach through television, we need to increase the number of our Prophecy Partners. We currently have a little over 2,500 Partners. We need to increase that number to 3,000 before the end of this year. To become a Prophecy Partner, you need to commit to praying for the ministry regularly and providing a donation of \$25 or more per month for one year. When you become a Partner, you will start receiving a letter from Dr. Reagan each month in which he will inform you about the ministry's activities and its needs. You will also receive a monthly gift. Six times each year this gift will be a copy of this magazine. In the alternate months, you will receive a DVD containing a teaching about Bible prophecy. You will also receive a copy of the ministry's yearly Holy Land calendar, and you will be eligible to receive discounts on purchases of materials produced by the ministry. Give us a call today! ❖

Register Now for Our Annual Conference!

Our annual Bible conference is scheduled to be held this year at the beautiful Eisemann Performing Arts Center in Richardson, Texas, a suburb of Dallas. We normally hold our conference the last weekend in June, but this year we had to move it to mid-July in order to get a facility that would be large enough to hold our expected audience of 1,500. The actual dates are July 11-12 (Friday evening through Saturday afternoon).

Directly across the street from the Center is the Renaissance Dallas Richardson Hotel. This is an outstanding business hotel that normally charges \$174 or more for a room. We have negotiated a special deal with them to provide the rooms for this conference for only \$89 per night! To reserve a room, call 972-367-2000 and ask for the Lamb & Lion special convention rate.



Janet Paschal

The conference will begin on Friday evening with a concert by Janet Paschal who won the Dove Award in 2011 for Female Vocalist of the Year. Following her concert, Dr. Reagan will kick-off the speaking part of the conference with a presentation related to the conference's theme: "America's Spiritual Crisis." In the last issue of this magazine we told you about two of our featured guest speakers — Warren Smith and Eric Barger. Both of these men are outstanding defend-

ers of the faith, and both are very articulate speakers.

Another of our featured speakers will be Mike Gendron, of Proclaiming the Gospel Ministries. Like Warren Smith and Eric Barger, Mike is an eloquent and Bible-based defender of the faith. As a former Catholic, his ministry focuses on sharing the Gospel with Catholics. He is known as an expert on Christian doctrine, and he will be discussing the growing apostasy in the Church today.



Mike Gendron

Nationally acclaimed author, Carl Gallups will be another of our speakers. His books, *The Magic Man in the Sky* and *The Rabbi Who Found Messiah* have both become best-sellers. He has appeared on our TV program several times, and has distinguished himself as a highly informed and articulate defender of the Christian faith. Carl was a criminal investigator for 20 years before entering the ministry. Today, he pastors a church in Florida.



Carl Gallups



Dr. Reagan with Jan Markell

Our sixth speaker will be Jan Markell, a Messianic Jew, who is the founder and spokesperson for Olive Tree Ministries, based in Minnesota. The purposes of her ministry are to help people understand today's events from a biblical perspective, to contend for the faith in Jesus Christ, and to help the Church stand against deception as a watchman on the wall. She has a syndicated radio program that is broadcast over 652 stations all across America.

Following the ending of the conference on Saturday afternoon, there will be a banquet at the Renaissance Hotel where Dr. Reagan will speak and Jack Hollingsworth will present a musical concert. The banquet is limited to 200 and costs \$45 per person (non-refundable). Jack has been the featured singer on the "Christ in Prophecy" television show ever since it began broadcasting in 2002. He and his wife, Sally have a ministry called Acts 29. They constantly criss-cross the nation, preaching, teaching and singing at churches, prisons, and homeless shelters.



Jack Hollingsworth



The Eisemann Performing Arts Center in Richardson, Texas.

The conference itself is free of charge, but registration is required. You can register through our website at lamblion.com, or you can call 972-736-3567 Monday thru Friday, from 8am to 5pm. Mark the dates on your calendar and plan to be with us. And in the meantime, pray for this conference to reach many souls for Jesus. ✚

Anniversary Celebration!

We celebrated the 34th anniversary of Lamb & Lion Ministries on April 1st with a luncheon for the staff.



Left to right, front row: Kay Bien, Jana Olivieri, Reva Frye, Rachel Houck, Joyce Shurtleff, Heather Jones, and Cathie Grubb. Second row, left to right: Nathan Jones, Tony Privitt, Trey Collich, Leo Houck, Dave Reagan, Brett Everett, George Collich, and Gary Byers.

Dr. Reagan shared some memories with the staff. He said that one of his most vivid memories of the first year of the ministry (1980) was all the tedious time that he and his wife, Ann, spent hand addressing the monthly newsletter. The ministry began in April with 200 people on its mailing list. By the end of the year, there were 1,000 on the list.

At a board meeting held in December of that year, Dr. Reagan told the board that he and Ann had to have some relief from all the hand addressing. He suggested that the ministry purchase an Address-O-Graph machine.

One of the trustees suggested that we purchase a computer instead. Dr. Reagan said he had no idea that desktop computers had been invented and were available. He asked how much it would cost. The board member said he would have to call someone. He did so and came back to the meeting to report that it would cost \$4,500 (the equivalent of \$12,800 today!). Some of the board members made immediate contributions and others made pledges, and we were able to purchase the ministry's first computer in February of 1981.

It was a Radio Shack TRS-80, Model 2 (which its users quickly dubbed as "Trash 2"). It had all of 56K memory! It used an 8 ½ inch disk that could hold only 300,000 bytes. If a person moved from Texas to Tennessee, we had to insert the Texas disk and delete them and then insert the Tennessee disk and add them. Dr. Reagan said it was cumbersome and slow, but when it printed out the first batch of mailing labels, he said he felt like he had "died and gone to Heaven."



Dr. Reagan in 1981

Dr. Reagan also pointed out that it was very difficult to start a ministry in the 1980s, before the Internet was made available to the public. He spent the entire decade just trying to get the ministry known. He then pointed out that today, if a person has something to say, he can use the Internet to get known overnight. The ministry joined the Internet world in 1995.

We praise God for His faithfulness to our ministry! ❖

Israel Pilgrimages

The latest Lamb & Lion pilgrimage to Israel was hosted by two of the ministry's staff members — George Collich and Nathan Jones. The pilgrimage group, consisting of 50 people, departed for the Holy Land in mid-March and returned on March 25th. They were blessed with good weather throughout the trip, and they were also blessed with a Messianic Jewish guide by the name of Ronnie Cohen.

Our next pilgrimage is scheduled for June 9-20. It will be hosted by one of our Trustees, Sam McCullough, and by our new Assistant Evangelist, Tim Moore. Call us immediately if you are interested in this trip (972-736-3567).

Our Fall pilgrimage is scheduled for November 8 through 19. The air carrier will be Lufthansa, and that means there will be a overnight layover on the way back home in Frankfurt. The first two nights of all our tours are spent in Tel Aviv, the next two in Tiberias (on the Sea of Galilee), and the last five in Jerusalem. The tours are personally designed by Dr. Reagan and the tour hosts are trained by him. Give us a call if you are interested in this November tour, and we will send you a brochure as soon

as it is ready. Don't miss the opportunity for the Bible to come alive for you in a special way as you walk where Jesus walked.



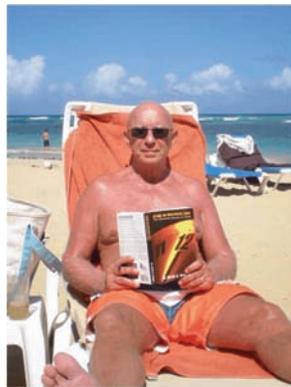
Nathan Jones speaks to the pilgrimage group in Independence Hall in Tel Aviv, explaining the biblical significance of what happened there on May 14, 1948.

Ministry News

Schedule — In the month of **May** Dr. Reagan will be speaking on Sunday at Union Valley Baptist Church in Beebe, Arkansas (4) and at a prophecy conference to be held at Woodland Hills Baptist Church in Longview, Texas (16-18). Nathan Jones will also be speaking at the Longview conference. In **June** Dr. Reagan will travel to North Carolina to speak at a Creation conference that will be held at the Ridgecrest Conference Center (5-6). Also that month Sam McCullough and Tim Moore will host the second Lamb & Lion Israel pilgrimage of this year (9-20). In **July** Dr. Reagan will speak at the First Christian Church in Custer City, Oklahoma (6). In the middle of the month, the Lamb & Lion annual Bible conference will be held in Richardson, Texas (11-12).



Evangelists — We have two evangelists on staff who are available to take speaking engagements at churches and conferences. One is Nathan Jones, our Web Minister. Most of you are very familiar with him. The other is our newest staff member, Tim Moore, who lives in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Tim is a Colonel in the Air Force Reserve, he serves in the Kentucky State Legislature as a Representative, and he is a commercial pilot. Because Tim is a commercial pilot, he can fly anywhere free of charge. Both of these men are ordained ministers, and both of them can provide in-depth teaching about God's Prophetic Word. These men will be taking Dr. Reagan's place as he cuts back his speaking schedule due to his wife's illness. Because this is a faith ministry, all we ask is for the sponsoring church or organization to cover expenses and take a love offering for this ministry. We have no fees. To contact Nathan, call 972-736-3567. To contact Tim, call 270-723-5863.



Don Mercer

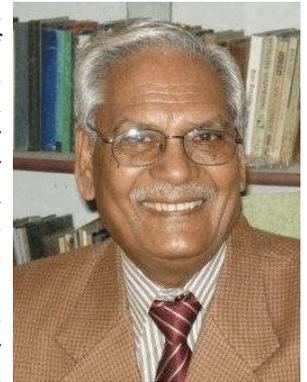
Taking it easy — Pictured on the left is Don Mercer of Delton, Michigan. He is a serious student of Bible prophecy, and he has a great sense of humor. While all of us were freezing to death in February, he sent Dr. Reagan this photo of himself on the beach in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. He is holding a copy of Dr. Reagan's book, *Living on Borrowed Time*. It is a book about the signs of the times that point to the Lord's soon return. He suggested the following caption:

"Some people just can't get enough of Dr. Reagan's books."

Tourism Award — While our latest pilgrimage group was in Israel, they were invited to the Ministry of Tourism where an award was given to Dr. Reagan "for your continuing devotion and unwavering commitment to promoting pilgrimage tours to the Holy Land." Accordingly, Dr. Reagan was designated an "Ambassador of Goodwill for Tourism." It would have been Dr. Reagan's 45th trip to Israel, but he had to back out at the last moment due to his wife's illness. George Collich is pictured below accepting the award for Dr. Reagan.



Missions — Last year, through your help, we provided a total of \$303,015 for missions, both foreign and domestic. One of the foreign missions we have supported for more than 20 years is that of Nazir Gill in Faisalabad, Pakistan. He is a very brave man who lives under the constant threat of death from Muslim fanatics. He speaks many languages and has used his language ability to translate and publish our books. Over the past two years, he has suffered many afflictions. His brother was killed in a truck accident, and his son (who is also an evangelist) was severely injured. One of the churches he works with was bombed and many were killed and wounded. His son was kidnapped by Muslims, and then, a few days later, he was mysteriously released. His wife died of a long-term illness, and now we have been notified that he has suffered a stroke and is paralyzed on one side. He is 78 years old. Please help us send this great servant of God a gift to help with his medical expenses, and please pray for his full recovery. Mark your gift for "Pakistan."



Nazir Gill



Mail Room — Our mail room gets very hectic at times due to the volume of orders. The three key people who try to keep us on top of the orders are pictured to the left: Joyce Shurtleff, Tony Privitt, and our mail room director, Cathie Grubb. ❖



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Dr. Reagan's Newest Book!

It should come off the press in early June, so it should be ready for distribution by the time you receive this magazine. The book focuses on the evil of Replacement Theology and the tragedy of Dual Covenant Theology. In the process, it deals with the following questions, among others:

- Have the Jews ceased to be God's Chosen People?
- Are they guilty of the unforgivable sin of "killing God"?
- Has God replaced them with the Church?
- Has God transferred their promises to the Church?
- Have they lost all hope as a nation?
- Are they devoid of any role in the end times?
- If God still loves them, how could He allow them to experience the Holocaust?
- Do they have their own way of salvation, separate and apart from Jesus?

Dr. Reagan demonstrates from the Scriptures that Replacement Theology is unbiblical, and he shows how it developed early in Church history, generating a virulent form of anti-Semitism that laid the foundation for the Holocaust. He also reveals that modern day anti-Semitism is expressed in the form of anti-Zionism.

With regard to Dual Covenant Theology, Dr. Reagan proves that it is completely unbiblical and is a tragedy because it constitutes loving the Jewish people right into Hell. In the process he reveals that one of America's best known Evangelical pastors is an advocate of this terribly mistaken theology.

Other topics covered in the book include the phenomenon of Messianic Judaism, the hope of Christian



Zionism, the horror of the Holocaust, and the most important prophetic development of the 20th Century. Dr. Reagan also takes a look at the Middle East crisis in biblical perspective.

The book runs 232 pages in length and sells for \$15 plus the cost of shipping. You can order it via our website at www.lamblion.com. Or, you can call us at 972-736-3567 Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm Central Time. ❖