



PROPHECY IS LIKE A LAMP SHINING IN A DARK PLACE. 2 PETER 1:19

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EDITION

Lamplighter

LAMB & LION MINISTRIES
a Non-Denominational Christian Media Ministry

November/December
2021

God with Us

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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Our September/October *Lamplighter* introduced our new *Christ in Prophecy* television series, focusing on Jesus in the Old Testament. Although various inspired authors recorded the Old Testament, the very word "testament" conveys the realization that it is a unified testimony.

God Himself was the only eyewitness to the actual Beginning. There could be no better witness, no more credible source, than Almighty God.

The opening chapter of the first "bookend" of the Bible, Genesis, describes how God created all that we know and observe. Genesis 3 infers that God interacted with Man regularly as He "walked in the garden in the cool of the day" (3:8).

Clearly, Man was made to be in communion with God. But because of sin, men and women were cast out of the garden—separated from Holy God and cursed to be in opposition to the very creation that surrounds them. And yet...

Even as God's righteous judgment was handed down, He revealed the coming of One who would strike back at Satan and restore both the creation order and Man's relationship with God.

Throughout the Old Testament, God's metanarrative — His overarching story — points to the one Paul called the second or "last" Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). Isaiah told us His name: Immanuel—meaning "God with us."

When Joshua encountered the Captain of the LORD's host, he learned not to presume that God sides with us in every circumstance (Joshua 5:13-15). Instead, He offers us something much more profound: an avenue to a restored relationship with the King of the Universe.

Jesus Christ fulfilled the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, pointing to a Savior. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The Apostles "saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth"—and they have testified to us. Someday, this same Jesus who ascended into heaven as they watched will come again in the same way (Acts 1:11).

Then, the Word—the eternal Son of God—will dwell among us forevermore.

Godspeed!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Moore".

Tim Moore





Wise Men (and Women) Still Seek Him

Atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell once said that if he died and met God, he would accuse God of providing insufficient evidence of His existence. Russell wanted God to provide a special message outside the Bible—but a study of history shows that God has already done that.

Blaise Pascal [a French mathematician and theologian] was wiser than Bertrand Russell. Pascal understood that God establishes Biblical objectivity while respecting man's subjective liberty: God is "willing to appear openly to those who seek Him with all their heart, and to be hidden from those who flee from Him with all their heart. God so regulates the knowledge of Himself that He has given indication of Himself which are visible to those who seek Him and not to those who do not seek Him. There is enough light for those to see who only desire to see, and enough obscurity for those who have a contrary disposition."

Praise God who overcomes fear and will one day wipe away every tear.



Marvin Olasky, editor of World Magazine
(September 11, 2021), used by permission.

DWELLING IN THE PRESENCE OF THE



Almighty

TIM MOORE

"Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."

"That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs Beaver. "If there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most, or else just silly."

"Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.

"Safe?" said Mr Beaver; "Don't you hear what Mrs Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."

"I'm longing to see him," said Peter, "even if I do feel frightened when it comes to that point."

~ C.S. Lewis on Aslan, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* ~

Dwelling with the Almighty sounds like such a wonderful idea. The extended protection of so great a guardian would seem to ensure our safety and well-being. At Christmas we conjure up images of baby Jesus and wistfully think how wonderful it would be to worship Him.

But men and women have always found it strangely perilous to be in the presence of the true and living God. The intersection of the Holy and the profane (which each of us certainly is when compared to Him) creates a tension that is dangerous to say the least.

The profanity of Adam and Eve's sin ended their communion with God. Because they sinned, they were ejected from the Garden and burdened with toil and inevitable death. Creation itself was cursed.

Israel later learned the peril of dwelling in the presence of God. When His Shekinah Glory filled the tabernacle, not even Moses could enter. The penalty for sullying the camp where the Holy God was present was swift and sure. God's blessing flowed into the people He chose to dwell among, but His righteous anger was also incited by their faithlessness—perhaps more so because they should have known better.

When Jesus came to dwell among men, his parents learned that their lives and immediate safety were threatened by forces opposed to the newborn King. Shepherds may have come to worship him as he lay in a manger, but Herod's paranoia and hatred forced Joseph and Mary to flee—and led to the slaughter of many innocent children.

Jesus warned us too that in this world we will have trouble. He said that those who trust in Him and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit will be hated by all because of His name. But, He also assured us that He has overcome the world and that by enduring to the end we will be saved (John 16:33; Matthew 10:22).

Our current *Christ in Prophecy* television series focuses on Jesus in the Old Testament. As we reflect on the hinge of human history—His first advent—we understand anew His promise that we will dwell with the Almighty.

**"SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY
WILL FOLLOW ME ALL THE DAYS
OF MY LIFE, AND I WILL DWELL
IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD
FOREVER."**

PSALM 23:6

FINDING THE MESSIAH IN LEVITICUS

I was recently paid a back-handed compliment. Recollecting those books of the Bible thought by many to be boring and dull, my pastor remarked that Leviticus is a book "only Tim Moore finds exciting". He had no idea how true that is!

This 27-chapter book of the Old Testament focuses on the establishment of tabernacle worship and the role of the priestly tribe—the Levites. It also outlines God's provision for Israel to live in proximity to Him.

Christians may wonder what significance Leviticus has to us. Even Rabbinical Judaism has largely abandoned the Levitical order with its priestly mandates. But when you see Jesus Christ in the book of Leviticus, you will praise Him for the revelation it contains.

Moses recorded the Hebrew Torah—the first five books of our Bible—to convey God's account of Creation, mankind's fall, His interaction with an increasingly wicked world, and His relationship with His chosen people. Leviticus immediately follows Exodus, when God delivered His chosen people from captivity in Egypt and led them toward the Promised Land.

The Jewish people learned to depend upon the Lord as they witnessed His power and benefited from His providence. Foreshadowing Christ, Moses was their great deliverer and intercessor. At Mount Sinai he inter-

ceded with the Lord on their behalf and was given the Law—including the Ten Commandments. The people affirmed their commitment to a covenant with the Lord, pledging, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" (Exodus 24:7).

Demonstrating the radical new relationship He was offering, Yahweh invited Moses, Aaron and his sons, and 70 elders of Israel to come up on the mountain. Exodus 24:10-11 says, "they saw the God of Israel... Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they saw God, and they ate and drank." In short, they experienced the blessing Adam had known before the Fall—intimacy with Almighty God.

God gave His chosen intercessor, Moses, specific instructions for the construction of a tabernacle, where He would dwell among the Israelites. After delivering them from bondage in Egypt where they toiled on behalf of Pharaoh (whose name meant "The Great House"), the LORD directed them to construct a dwelling for Him.

Exodus 40:34-35 tells us that once the tabernacle was finished, "then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." Strikingly, however, Moses—God's own hand-picked intercessor, the one He had blessed to see His glory (33:17-23; 34:5-8)—was not able to enter the tent of meeting because "the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:35). The question this raises is this: If God's chosen human deliverer Moses cannot enter His divine presence, who can?

THE HOLY AND THE PROFANE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY

God revealed the way for sinful people to draw close to Him. Jewish priests dutifully performed a never-ending series of rites to preserve the intersection of the holy and the profane—God and man in close proximity. Following those painstaking rituals, Moses and Aaron were finally able to enter the tent of meeting. As long as Israel followed God's plan they enjoyed the blessing of dwelling in His presence.

Still, Israel learned the proximity to the Lord is both a blessing and a risk. Who is holy enough to come boldly into His presence without offending His unfathomable holiness? Who is righteous enough to live with Him who defines righteousness?

IT IS A FEARFUL THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD.

HEBREWS 10:31



WHO MAY ASCEND THE HILL OF THE LORD?

This question resonates throughout Leviticus—and the entire Old Testament. In the Psalms David spoke poetically of God's dwelling place and asked, "O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill?" (15:1). "Who may ascend onto the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place?" (24:3).

David's answer sets an incredibly high bar: "He who walks with integrity and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart" (Psalm 15:2). And, "He who has clean hands and a pure heart" (Psalm 24:4). Even David, a man after God's own heart, realized the limits of his relationship with God (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22). He was not allowed to build the temple (1 Chronicles 28:3). At times he had to pray, "Do not cast me away from Your presence" and express hope to merely "stand at the threshold of the House of [God]" (Psalm 51:10-12, 84:10).

Isaiah stated those eternal questions this way: "Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning?" (Isaiah 33:14). He then asserted, "He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity" (Isaiah 33:15). That sounds so simple, so easy, so attainable. But it is not.

NONE IS RIGHTEOUS; NO, NOT ONE

The entire Old Testament documents man's failure to achieve righteousness. A person might purpose to cleanse their own heart of the leaven of sin, but it proved impossible to wash away the stain. Like indelible ink, it has saturated into our flesh.

"Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place?" Considering the meticulous preparations the High Priest underwent just to enter the Lord's holy presence one day a year, hope that any

of us can climb the mountain of the Lord to dwell in His presence forever fades very quickly.

PROPHETIC HOPE

And yet the Bible prophesies a day when God will indeed dwell with us and an intimate relationship will be restored. David's Psalm describes how man will attain such standing with God: "He shall receive a blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation" (Psalm 24:5). The God who saves will impart the righteousness that allows man to enter an everlasting relationship with God.

In the language of Leviticus, the very blessing of ascending the mountain of the Lord—entering into His holy presence and dwelling with Him in intimate communion—would come not by striving but as a gracious, unmerited blessing from the Lord. In fact, instead of us climbing the mountain where God dwells, He would come down from the heavenly mountain and dwell in our midst. His journey on earth began in Bethlehem and ended at Calvary. As the old hymn says,

*Heaven came down and glory filled my soul;
When at the Cross my Savior made me whole.*

GOD'S PROVISION FOR ATONEMENT

Leviticus describes an exacting process for drawing near to God. Yahweh is presented as One so holy—so set apart and full of power and glory—that living in close proximity to Him is perilous. As Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, learned at the cost of their lives, it shows that we cannot approach God through just any scheme.

Leviticus 16 and 17 prescribes a law of atonement, offering a way to draw near to Him once a year. Atonement refers to the legal reunion of two alienated parties. In essence, it represents the "at-one-ment" of two that were



estranged. Atonement required removing impurity and sprinkling blood as a purification offering. The price of atonement is the life of the sacrifice.

As a mediator, Moses was willing to sacrifice himself for his people. Fulfilling that prophetic type, Jesus Christ became the ultimate sacrifice that offers us eternal atonement with God. And since He was resurrected and now sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven, He is our great Mediator.

So, Leviticus teaches:

- The only way to approach God is by the way that He has revealed.
- Sacrifice and an ordained priest are necessary to draw near to God.
- The first step is atonement—reconciliation between God and man.

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6). The means of salvation could not be clearer—and the stakes could not be more well-defined. Anyone who preaches or pursues any other supposed path to salvation is to be accursed (Galatians 1:8-9).

The Levitical system of tabernacle worship was designed to accommodate the presence of God. "Tabernacle" is both a noun and a verb—meaning the portable dwelling place of the Lord and the action "to dwell." God proclaimed, "I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people" (Leviticus 26:11-12).

The priestly system eventually broke down. But King David professed his prophetic hope to "dwell in the house

of the LORD forever" (Psalm 23:6). Mankind was created to live in God's divine presence—in real and eternal relationship with Him. That is why our souls will be restless until we find ultimate rest (what you might call the eternal Sabbath) in Him.

SEEING CHRIST IN LEVITICUS

There are many other prophetic foreshadowings of Jesus Christ in Leviticus. I will mention five:

1. The sacrifice brought before the Lord had to be spotless and pure (Lev. 1:3; 3:1; 4:3; 5:15).
 - Jesus was the spotless Lamb of God (1 Pet. 1:19).
2. A priest—a set-apart son of Adam—was required to offer blood in order to secure atonement for the chosen people of God (Lev. 1:15, 2:16, 3:16, 4:16).
 - Jesus (the last Adam and perfect priest in the order of Melchizedek) secured our atonement with His own blood (Heb. 7:14-28, 1 Cor. 15:45-49).
3. Every year, blood was sprinkled on the ark's mercy seat and the ground in front of the ark—covering the sin of God's chosen people and pointing to the redemption of Creation from the curse brought about by Man's sin (Lev. 16).
 - Jesus' shed blood covers our sin and will restore the world (Matt. 26:28, Heb. 12:24, Rom. 8:19-23).
4. The seven-branched lampstand shone on the 12 loaves of showbread—symbolizing the seven spirits of God that radiate His glory and truth upon the 12 tribes of Israel and the world (Lev. 25:1-9).
 - New Jerusalem has 12 gates inscribed with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel; "The city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The



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MOMENT OF EVERY DAY.



A.W. TOZER
THE PURSUIT OF GOD

nations will walk by its light..." (Rev. 21:23-24).

5. The tabernacle, an earthly copy of His heavenly abode, pointed backward to Eden (the original mountain of God) and to Mount Sinai, where God's Presence was revealed to Israel; it also pointed forward to Mount Zion and God's indwelling Shekinah Presence in the temple (Heb. 8:5).

- The tabernacle and temple both foreshadow the promise of His eternal dwelling on the new Earth: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them" (Rev. 21:3-4).

Hebrews addresses Jesus' prophetic fulfillment of the role of priestly mediator. The Levitical system required ongoing sacrifices because the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins (Hebrews 10:1-4). The entire priestly order pointed to Jesus Christ, who, "having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12).

RELEVANCE TODAY

What is the significance of Leviticus to a Christian in the 21st Century? The answer is reflected in the answer to David's original questions: Who can ascend the mountain of God, stand in His holy place, and dwell in His Presence forever? Only Jesus Christ—and those who have put their trust in Him.

THEREFORE, BRETHREN, SINCE WE HAVE CONFIDENCE TO ENTER THE HOLY PLACE BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS, BY A NEW AND LIVING WAY WHICH HE INAUGURATED FOR US THROUGH THE VEIL, THAT IS, HIS FLESH, AND SINCE WE HAVE A GREAT PRIEST OVER THE HOUSE OF GOD, LET US DRAW NEAR WITH A SINCERE HEART IN FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH, HAVING OUR HEARTS SPRINKLED CLEAN FROM AN EVIL CONSCIENCE AND OUR BODIES WASHED WITH PURE WATER

HEBREWS 10:19-22

Leviticus demonstrates that the promises of God are "Yes and Amen" (2 Corinthians 1:20). It provides insight into the age-old prophecies of God—many of which were already fulfilled in the life and person of Jesus Christ, and

others that await final fulfillment when He returns to dwell among us here on the earth.

Finally, the book of Leviticus should also spark in us a desire to realize once again the immeasurable blessing of dwelling in the presence of God. No one other than Jesus Christ has had constant communion with the Father in heaven. Even Moses found that there were limitations to his access to God's Shekinah glory. But God has promised through multiple prophets that we will see Him and dwell in His midst forever. Isaiah prophesied, "Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; they will behold a far distant land" (Isaiah 33:17).

Zechariah captures the thrilling promise of the end-times state still yet to be realized:


SING FOR JOY AND BE GLAD, O DAUGHTER OF ZION; FOR BEHOLD I AM COMING AND I WILL DWELL IN YOUR MIDST," DECLARES THE LORD. "MANY NATIONS WILL JOIN THEMSELVES TO THE LORD IN THAT DAY AND WILL BECOME MY PEOPLE. THEN I WILL DWELL IN YOUR MIDST, AND YOU WILL KNOW THAT THE LORD OF HOSTS HAS SENT ME TO YOU.

ZECHARIAH 2:10-11

Note the pronoun at the end of this passage. It is clear that the Son is declaring this prophetic word to Zechariah; the nation of Israel will know that the Father (the LORD of hosts) "has sent Me to you".

The promise of God's eternal presence is not only for the Jew. It is for all who are part of the bride of Christ—the redeemed saints who are called overcomers throughout Revelation. As children of God, we shall see Him (1 John 3:2). If you know Him as Savior and Lord, Jesus is even now preparing a place for you so that you can be with Him forever (John 14:2-3).

The promise of at-one-ment with Almighty God that Leviticus foreshadows led to Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. It will be eternally realized when the Lord dwells with us again in the New Jerusalem. That is a promise every believer can look forward to with eager anticipation, providing yet another reason to shout, "Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!" ♦



On the next day, the great multitude who had come to the feast [Passover], when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees, and went out to meet Him, and began to cry out, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of Yahweh, even the King of Israel."

John 12:12-13

Whenever seasoned Christians hear the phrase, "The Triumphal Entry," their minds always go to the day described in the passage above—the day Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem at the beginning of the last week of His life.

And what a triumphal entry it was! He had just raised his friend, Lazarus, from the dead after he had been in the tomb for four days. He had performed this miracle in the village of Bethany, which was a suburb of Jerusalem. The news of the miracle had spread throughout Jerusalem like wildfire. Thus, when the rumor spread that Jesus was about to enter Jerusalem, tens of thousands gathered in the Kidron Valley to welcome Him to the city.

The scene was majestic as Jesus approached the city riding on a donkey. The frenzied people paved His path with their garments and with palm branches. And they shouted "Hosanna to the Son of David!" – meaning, "Save us, Messiah!"

The religious leaders of the nation (the Pharisees) were outraged over the adulation being given to Jesus. They demanded that He rebuke the people for praising Him as their Messiah. But Jesus refused to do so. He told the Pharisees that if the people became silent, "the stones will cry out" (Luke 19:39-40). The Pharisees also became upset over the fact that even small children and babes were praising Jesus (Matthew 21:15-16). When they protested, Jesus quoted Psalm 8:2 to them—a verse that prophesied that praise for the Messiah would come "from the mouths of infants and nursing babes."

THE FIRST TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

But as triumphal as that entry was, it was nothing compared to the Lord's first one on the night when He was born in Bethlehem. It was one of history's greatest miracles for it was the moment when God became flesh, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy that one day God would take on human form and become "Emmanuel," meaning "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14). The birth also fulfilled the prophecy made by Micah 700 years earlier that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

What a spectacular event this first triumphal entry must have been! Unlike the Jerusalem entry, which was hailed by thousands of human beings, the Lord's entry into the world at Bethlehem was proclaimed by an angel who appeared in the heavens at night and gloriously announced the birth of Jesus



THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY



DR. DAVID R. REAGAN

(Luke 2:8-12). He proclaimed the baby to be the "Savior who is Christ [Messiah] the Lord!" (Luke 2:11).

That angel was then joined by a heavenly host of angels who began praising God the Father (Luke 2:14):

*Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men
with whom He is pleased.*

The scene must have been bathed in brilliant light because the Shekinah Glory of God the Father shone all around the angels as they praised the Messiah's birth (Luke 2:9). The Bethlehem shepherds to whom the heavenly host appeared must have been stupefied. But when they gathered their wits, they hurried into the village of Bethlehem and found the baby in an animal pen, sleeping in a feeding trough, just as the initial angel had said would be the case (Luke 2:12).

FUTURE TRIUMPHAL ENTRIES

The Scriptures prophesy that Jesus has two future triumphal entries that He is yet to fulfill. The first is the Rapture of the Church that is described in detail in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. There are no prophecies that must be fulfilled before the Rapture occurs. It could happen any moment.

When it does, Jesus will appear in the heavens in glory and majesty, and all true believers in Him will be taken up to meet Him in the sky—both the living and the dead. All will be instantly glorified, being given immortal bodies. They will then return with Him to Heaven.

This entry will be triumphal only for those who have put their faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Others will be left behind to face the savagery of the Antichrist during the seven years of the Tribulation.

THE SECOND COMING

Jesus' final triumphal entry will be His Second Coming to the earth at the end of the Tribulation when he returns to establish His Millennial Kingdom. He will reign from Jerusalem for a thousand years, bringing peace, righteousness and justice to this sin-sick world.

We are told that He will return to the Mount of Olives—the very site from which He ascended into Heaven (Zechariah 14:4 and Acts 1:6-12). But on that wonderful day, He will not be riding a donkey. No, He will ascend to the Mount of Olives on a white war horse—the symbol of a victorious general.

He will be accompanied by millions of glorified saints and angels who will be singing His praises (Revelation 19:14, Zechariah 14:14, Jude 14 and Colossians 3:4). He

will speak a supernatural command, and all the forces of the Antichrist will be instantly killed (Zechariah 14:12). The Jewish remnant that will still be alive will accept Him as Messiah, proclaiming, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of Yahweh (Zechariah 12:10 and Matthew 23:39).

Jesus will then ride down into the Kidron Valley and up to the Eastern Gate that leads into the Temple Mount. It is the gate that Ezekiel prophesied would one day be shut (which it was in 1541) and would remain closed until the Messiah comes to establish His worldwide reign (Ezekiel 44:1-3).

As Jesus approaches the gate, it will blow open and welcome Him as the King of kings. This amazing imagery is presented in Psalm 24:7 and 10:

*Lift up your heads, O gates,
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
That the King of glory may come in!
Who is the King of glory?
Yahweh of hosts,
He is the King of glory.*

Jesus will then be coronated the King of kings and Lord of lords. Many peoples will say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob" as He begins His glorious reign as described in Isaiah 2:3-4:

*...the law will go forth from Zion,
And the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.
And He will judge between the nations,
And will render many decisions for many peoples;
And they will hammer their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not lift up sword against nation.
And never again will they learn war.*

THE SPIRITUAL TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

The most important triumphal entry that you can experience is the one that happens when you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior. On that day Jesus makes a triumphal entry into your heart by sending the Holy Spirit to dwell within you. The Spirit seals you for redemption and begins to guide you, comfort you, transform you and prepare you for eternal life with your Savior.

If you have not yet reached out in faith to receive Jesus as your Savior, then I urge you to do so immediately by crying out to God to be saved. He has promised "that whoever calls on the name of Yahweh will be saved" (Joel 2:32 and Acts 2:21).

Maranatha! (1 Corinthians 16:22) ♦

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 1:7-8

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD *Revealed*

NATHAN E. JONES



THE CHRISTMAS JESUS

How in your mind's eye do you picture Jesus Christ? Because the Christmas holiday is a celebration of the Savior's birth, when picturing Jesus, one's mind naturally depicts a baby. Popular nativity scenes portray Luke's description of Jesus as a tiny babe swaddled in strips of cloth and lying in an animal trough. His parents, Mary and Joseph, gaze down adoringly. Shepherds and wise men gape in amazement from their perches along stone walls. The heavenly host fly above majestically singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14).

While the angels add a sense of the divine to the Nativity Story, and Hollywood has added the additional touch of a beam of Bethlehem starlight spotlighting the little family, for the most part, the scene is rather pastoral—a peasant family sitting in the hay among smelly animals in some sort of cave. It is meant to be a very humble scene.

Because Christmastime happens to also be celebrated among cultural Christians and even non-Christians, the humble imagery of the baby Jesus remains in the mind's eye. That is, until Easter, when Jesus is portrayed altogether differently. Now He's all grown up, fully bearded, but frail and emaciated. His lithe body suffers from beatings and is covered in lash marks. He is nailed naked to a tree where he limply hangs bleeding. And there Jesus remains on that cross in the mind's eye, at least until Christmas returns and resets the mental image of Jesus back into a tiny baby again. And the circle continues.

One of the most popular scenes from the movie *Talladega Nights* is when the lead character, racecar driver Ricky Bobby (played by Will Ferrell), says grace with his family over a feast of fast food. He begins

each praise and prayer request with “Dear Lord Baby Jesus” until his wife, Carley, impatiently interrupts with “Hey, you know, Sweetie, Jesus did grow up. You don’t always have to call him ‘baby.’” Incensed, Ricky responds with: “Well, I like the Christmas Jesus best and I’m saying grace. When you say grace you can say it to grown-up Jesus, or teenage Jesus, or bearded Jesus, or whoever you want.” Even Ricky’s father-in-law, Chip, chimes in with: “He was a man! He had a beard!” From there, the conversation degenerates as each family member describes the “Jesus” they prefer: a ninja fighting off evil samurai, sporting giant eagle’s wings, singing lead vocals in a band, and so on.

Christians watching this movie tend to squirm dumbfounded over whether this scene borders on blasphemy or comedy, and yet one cannot help but come away with a profound revelation—most people have created their own personal “Jesus.” People see Jesus in the only way they’ve ever encountered Him, and that’s often only during Christmas and Easter. Jesus remains to most as either a helpless baby or a dying man.

THE PRE-INCARNATE JESUS

Besides the Jesus portrayed at His First Coming in the New Testament, did you know that Jesus can be found making appearances in the Old Testament?

Most forget that the Son of God has always existed coeternal with the Father and Holy Spirit. His origins stretch back beyond the beginnings of the Creation (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1,18; 8:58; 16:28; 17:5; 1 Timothy 1:17). And, we know from Scriptures that Jesus just didn’t sit there in Heaven idly waiting to be “born of a woman.” The saints of the Old Testament era perceived the Son of God quite differently—as the “Angel of the Lord.” Should you happen to be wondering what the theological term is for the visible appearances of Jesus Christ in other forms prior to His incarnation, that would be the word “theophany.”

Also called the “Angel of His Presence” and the “Angel of the Covenant,” the Angel of the Lord made quite a number of visits to various ancient personages (such as Genesis 22:11-19; 31:11,13; 32:24; Exodus 14:19; Isaiah 63:9; Malachi 3:1). Hagar, Moses, Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, Joshua, Manoah, Isaiah, and Zechariah—they

all experienced dramatic encounters with a most unique “angel.”

We know that the Angel of the Lord wasn’t like any other kind of angel because He readily received the worship due only to God Almighty. By contrast, in the book of Revelation, the Apostle John “was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day,” meaning the Holy Spirit transported John off of Patmos and far into the future to witness the Day of the Lord (1:9-10). He quickly became overwhelmed by all that he saw. Flustered, John made the mistake of attempting to worship his angelic guide, who then immediately pulled the Elder to his feet and cried out: “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!” (22:9).

God’s angels never accept the worship of man, or else fall hard after the folly of Satan’s demons. And yet, the Angel of the Lord freely accepted worship. The Old Testament saints were all too happy to proclaim they had seen the very face of God. “So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: ‘For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved’” (Genesis 32:30).

The use of the label “angel” can appear problematic for us today when it comes to applying it to the Son of God, but remember that besides being used as a reference to Heaven’s servant caste, the label “angel” can transcend God’s angelic beings and also be used to describe the duty of God’s messenger. Jesus’ duty in His Old Testament appearances was for the purpose of serving as a messenger at vital key moments in Israel’s history. It would appear these events were just too important to send an everyday angel, and so God Himself appeared under the title of the Angel of the Lord. And so, as Herbert Lockyer explained, when those ancient saints pictured Jesus they saw Him as:

The angel of the Redeemer is now arrayed in mortal flesh, He like an Angel stands, and holds the promises and pardon in His hands; commissioned from the Father’s Throne, to make His grace to mortals known.

THE PROPHETIC JESUS

The beauty and majesty of God’s prophetic word introduce us to a third Jesus whom few rarely if ever encounter because they never study Bible prophecy. In the prophecies concerning Jesus’ Second Coming, human

frailty is stripped away revealing Christ's true glory, a divinity that the Apostles could only glimpse at the Transfiguration. Christ's true form stunned James and John into silence and Peter into babbling. The Apostles witnessed Jesus in His eternally glorified state.

With a self-introduction in Revelation 1:8 of, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End... the Almighty," Jesus breaks out of the box of babyhood with His claim to agelessness and ultimate power.

Revelation 1 continues to describe Jesus as, "One like the Son of Man," so only resembling frail humanity in appearance. Clothed with a garment and girded with a golden band, His hair gleams bright white like wool and His eyes blaze like flames. Jesus' feet glow like brass refined in a furnace and His voice thunders with the sound of many waters. Jesus' holiness blinds like the sun in its strength. The Jesus the elderly Apostle John encountered caused John to fall at His glowing feet as a dead man!

Jump ahead to Revelation 19 and you'll yet again stand in awe of the description of Jesus as He triumphantly returns to earth as a warrior king dispensing righteousness as the Judge waging war against Satan's forces. Jesus bursts out of the heavens riding His white war charger as the armies of Heaven trail endlessly behind Him. Jesus' eyes blaze like fire, atop His head sit many crowns, His robe is dipped in blood, and He strikes the enemy nations dead with the sword of the Word protruding out of His mouth. Emblazoned on Jesus' thigh is the title: "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

Often it is more palatable to paint Jesus inside the box of one's mind as a little baby or suffering servant, or keep Jesus appearing like an everyday angel as some cults do, but are those the real Jesus? In part, yes, for they were as much a part of Jesus as our own baby, childhood, and teenage selves once were to us then, but are no longer.

Jesus eternal is the Jesus of Bible prophecy. So, like John, stand in awe of your Savior revealed! ♦



For an in-depth look at the angels depicted in the book of Revelation, order Nathan Jones' best-selling book

The Mighty Angels of Revelation

Available online at
LambLion.com or Amazon

This edition of the *Lamplighter* features a new "Digging Deeper" section that we intend to include from time to time.

We encourage you to dig into the Word of God as you read the articles and watch *Christ in Prophecy*. Our goal is always to draw you closer to our Blessed Hope and His eternal Word.

**You can find our answers to the following questions at:
ChristinProphecy.org.**

In addition, we will sometimes post expanded articles from this magazine on our website.

As you look forward to the appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, we hope these questions will motivate you to dig deeper.



DIGGING DEEPER

into God's Word

1. We refer to the Bible as the Old Testament and the New Testament. Who's testimony is it?
2. What would you say are the themes of the Old Testament?
3. What are some examples of Jesus appearing in the Old Testament?
4. Are Bible "stories" historically accurate?
5. True or False? Creation occurred in six literal days.
6. When was the Messiah first introduced in Scripture?
7. True or False? God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ was His "Plan B."
8. How old is the Earth (thousands, millions, billions)?
9. True or False? As long as I believe in Christ, it doesn't really matter what I believe about Creation.
10. True or False? Biblical Creation is faith-based; Evolution is scientific.
11. Is it possible that God used the mechanisms of Evolution?
12. Did Abram come from a family that honored God?
13. Why did God choose Abram?
14. How many sons did Abraham have?
15. Are the Jews still special or "chosen"?
16. What does it mean to wrestle with God and man, as Jacob did?
17. What does it mean to walk with God?
18. How did Joseph overcome adversity time after time?
19. How did Jesus fulfill that prophetic promise of Isaiah 7:14?
20. True or False? The children of Israel found that dwelling in close proximity with God was a formula for inevitable blessing and success.

Meet Our Team

As we close out what has been a momentous year in so many ways here at Lamb & Lion Ministries, I'd like to highlight the fantastic team the Lord has brought together to proclaim Jesus' soon return. When you call the Ministry, you're likely to speak to one of the following gifted individuals—all of whom love the Lord and serve Him with great joy.



Tim Moore – CEO AND SENIOR EVANGELIST

Tim is the executive producer of the *Christ in Prophecy* television program and the Editor of the *Lamplighter* magazine. Tim has led all the Lamb & Lion Ministries pilgrimages to Israel since 2014 and travels to speak at conferences and churches on behalf of the ministry.



David Reagan – FOUNDER

Dave served as the Senior Evangelist for over 41 years, stepping down just this past June. He continues to write for the ministry and is an ongoing source of wisdom and encouragement.



Nathan Jones – INTERNET EVANGELIST

Nathan serves as the co-host of *Christ in Prophecy*, as well as the ministry's "Prophetic Perspectives." In addition to coordinating Lamb & Lion Ministries' online presence, he touches thousands of lives each month in his interactions with people around the world.



Vic Batista & Patrick Oliver

ASSISTANT EVANGELISTS

Vic Batista and Patrick Oliver serve as Lamb & Lion Ministries' Assistant Evangelists. They live in Florida and Ohio respectively but are able to travel and speak on behalf of the ministry. They also participate through podcasts and articles in the *Lamplighter*.

Rachel Houck – CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER



Rachel provides administrative oversight for the staff and keeps the daily activity on target—supervising, reorganizing, and streamlining all operations. She helps with proof reading, event planning and television production, serving as a camera operator, makeup artist and floor director for TV and video shoots.

Reva Frye – CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER



Reva provides oversight for the Ministry's finances and the finance team. She prepares the ministry's yearly budget for adoption by the Board of Trustees and coordinates asset management, expenditures, financial records, and our annual audit. Reva provides our internal IT support and assists as a proofer for the *Christ in Prophecy* television program.

Leo Houck – DIRECTOR OF SERVICES



Leo serves as the Director of Services and Caretaker. He provides all the logistical support for the ministry, managing the mailroom team as well as all the ministry's mailings. He oversees the upkeep of the ministry headquarters, vehicles, and grounds at Maranatha Acres. Leo also works behind the scenes on every TV and video shoot.

Trey Collich – MEDIA MINISTER



Trey's primary role is overseeing the production of the *Christ in Prophecy* television program and all the other video resources we offer. Trey was our first intern and has grown into a key role in the highly acclaimed television and streaming outreach we offer. He works collaboratively with staff to provide creative input and proofing for every show.

Jana Olivieri – CREATIVE DESIGNER



Jana serves as the Ministry's Creative Designer. Her talents are on display in most every product—printed or electronic—that Lamb & Lion produces. She edits and designs all of our graphic-intensive publications, including our annual calendar and catalog. She also serves as the Associate Editor for the *Lamplighter*—ensuring the high-quality graphic design and layout of the magazine on a bi-monthly basis. Jana also helps with event planning and creative media projects.

Brett Everett – MEDIA ASSOCIATE



Brett serves as the sound engineer for all our video and audio productions. A gifted editor, Brett works in post-production on the *Christ in Prophecy* television program and other video products as well.

Steven Stufflebean – WEB ASSOCIATE



Steven assists with all aspects of internet-based outreach technologies. He also serves as a camera operator, video editor, and audio technician—in studio and on remote location shoots.

Todd Hutchinson – FINANCE ASSOCIATE



Todd (also known as “Hutch”), processes our incoming mail and provides phone support for donations and resource sales. Along with the entire finance team he is responsible for producing receipts, letters, and shipping documents each day. He also provides proofreading support, ensuring that every article or book the ministry produces cites biblical references accurately.

Suzanne Smith – FINANCE ASSOCIATE



Suzanne processes all the ministry's mail on a daily basis (ensuring two-person accountability). She collates and tracks data on all our Prophecy Partners and financial supporters. She assists with proofing our printed material and administers our Millennial Kingdom Scholarship program, as well as our prayer outreach.

Cathie Grubb – MAILROOM SUPERVISOR



Cathie oversees the processing of every book, DVD, and magazine order. She also oversees and tracks Lamb & Lion's inventory of materials and interacts with publishers and shippers to ensure that our supply of resources is right-sized at all times.

Joyce Shurtleff – MINISTRY ASSOCIATE



Joyce works primarily in the mailroom, and is often the first person you'll reach if you call the ministry to place an order or request prayer. She also handles daily shipping and coordinates the gifts sent to new Prophecy Partners, both domestic and abroad.

Heather Jones – MEDIA ASSISTANT



Giving critical support to our media department, Heather transcribes every television program and DVD, provides script support during taping sessions, and proofs every TV episode and video.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

TIM MOORE

When Satan first endeavored to deceive Adam and Eve, he did so by discrediting God. His sly twisting and contradictions of God's clear instructions stoked sin in the human heart. The resulting curse consigned the creation to decay and mortal man to eventual death.

In the generations that followed, mankind strayed further and further from the living God. Recognizing the existence of a spiritual realm beyond our physical senses, many cultures fashioned and worshiped false Gods. Satan and his entourage of rebelling spirits lurked behind every idol crafted by the hands of men.

In today's upside-down world, there are men and women who profess to be Satanists. They laud the devil as lord and seek to purposely offend God Almighty. Their eventual recognition of truth will be tragic and swift if they pass from this life adhering to such foolishness.

Additionally, a rising chorus of people—especially in the former Christian West—now assert their rejection of any belief in God. They claim an enlightenment that frees them from belief in any deity. These self-claimed atheists instead worship humanity. Calling themselves humanists they believe that mankind will elevate its collective consciousness, leading to a utopia without suffering, want, or war.

POST-CHRISTIAN OBLIVION

When asked about their religious affiliation in nationwide polls, more and more young people are declaring themselves to be “nones”—meaning that they refuse to affiliate with any religion, especially Christianity ([https://](https://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/)

www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/).

Our own culture's slide into post-Christian oblivion was deceptively slow over the past century. But lately the rush toward secularism is accelerating with shocking speed. One such example of this occurred when Harvard University elected an avowed atheist to serve as its head chaplain.

Greg Epstein has been the humanist chaplain at Har-

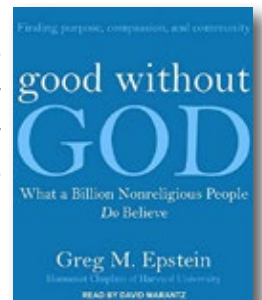


Greg Epstein

vard since 2005 and at MIT since 2018. The New York Times reports that his focus is “teaching students about the progressive movement that centers people's relationships with one another instead of with God.” His book asserts his belief that people can be “good without God”—a pointed rejection

of God's testimony. Speaking of the sons of men the LORD said, “They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one” (Psalm 14:2-3 and 53:2-3).

Epstein's identification with the progressive movement is telling. Most Americans are familiar with progressives like Alexandria Ocasio Cortez and Bernie Sanders. This ultra-Left fringe of American politics is committed to unlimited abortion on demand, socialist policies at every level of govern-



ment, the sexual revolution in general and LGBTQ advocacy in particular, and condemnation of Israel. The unifying inspiration for such an unholy mantra is a vehement rejection of God.



These modern-day pagans consider the God of the Bible to be an oppressive, patriarchal, White-privilege Relic of the past that must be rejected and opposed.

They ascribe to humanism that aspires to Satan's false promise "... you will be like God" (Genesis 3:5). Reflecting the rebels of Babel, they seek to build and make for themselves a name. The age-old aspiration to "reach for the heavens" in this context implies a clear rejection of the true and living God.

MODERN APPLICATION OF ANCIENT FOOLISHNESS

Although atheism in America is growing like a cancer, there is nothing new about this lie. David observed, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God' " (Psalm 14:1).



God is dead,
God remains dead,
and we have killed him.

Friedrich Nietzsche

In his letter to the Romans, Paul spoke of those who willfully flaunt their rebellion.

**FOR EVEN THOUGH THEY KNEW GOD,
THEY DID NOT HONOR HIM AS GOD
OR GIVE THANKS, BUT THEY BECAME
FUTILE IN THEIR SPECULATIONS,
AND THEIR FOOLISH HEART WAS
DARKENED. PROFESSING TO BE WISE,
THEY BECAME FOOLS.**

ROMANS 1:21-22.

We could begin understanding God and His provision for mankind just by believing and obeying His testimony about the beginning. Instead, America is enthusiastically rejecting God's prescription for human flourishing in Genesis 1 and 2:

- God distinguished Himself as the Creator from created mankind but offered the blessing of relationship.
 - Our culture rejects the very idea of an omnipotent Creator, preferring mindless, atheistic evolution instead.
- He created man and woman—distinct but equally made in the image of God.
 - Our culture rejects that binary reality and embraces self-declared gender identity.
- God set man a little lower than the angels, and commanded him to exercise dominion over the animal kingdom.
 - Our culture elevates the status of animals and treats human life (born and unborn) as disposable.
- God provided the special relationship between man and woman known as marriage, defining it as the foundation for society and the rightful realm for producing and raising children.
 - Our culture rejects marriage as an unnecessary relic of a patriarchal past.
- Even before the Fall, God gave mankind the gift of meaningful work.
 - Our culture increasingly treats work as a four-letter word and our government actively discourages it among those who most need the dignity and sustenance it offers.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

The world seems bent on pursuing foolishness. Christians should stay grounded in the Truth—and rooted in the One who created us all. In the fullness of time He will deal with those who reject Him and "take counsel against the LORD and His Anointed" (Psalm 2:2).

The fact that our society is being "given over" to lusts, degrading passions, and a depraved mind proves that His wrath will soon be revealed (Romans 1:24, 26, 28, 18).

We are living in the season of the Lord's return! ♦

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LESSON	KEY VERSE	PASSAGE
Genesis 1-2		
Genesis 3-4		
Genesis 5-11		
Genesis 12-50		
Exodus A		
Exodus B		

Abraham's ALTARS



DAVID BOWEN

David Bowen is the pastor of Standing Stones Community Church in Phoenix, AZ. He is the founder of Interpreting the Times—a web and radio ministry focusing on End Times.

Each day many voices clamor for our attention. Many of these voices are critical and opinionated, pushing us away from finding God. These voices will fade away, but God's voice, the only voice that matters, will last for eternity. So, what does God say? What has God said to His servants in the past? Are His promises still valid?

For some anticipating Jesus' soon return, current events play a significant role in understanding Biblical prophecy. However, when it comes to Biblical prophecy, one must look at today's events through three lenses. The most important lens is Scripture. The second lens is history. The last lens to consider is what is taking place in our culture today. Too often, sincere and passionate students of prophecy want to place the cultural lens in the first position and see the Bible through the events of the day. The daily news is not Scripture.

Regarding the dispute over the Land of Israel, God Himself answers the question, "Whose land is it?" God appeared to Abraham and de-

clared He was giving Abraham and his descendants the land known as Israel (Genesis 12:5-8). This interaction between God and his servant took place in a place called Shechem. Abraham's response to this revelation was to build an altar and to worship God.

THE ALTAR

Noah was the first servant of God to build an altar (Genesis 8:20). That raises the question, "What was the purpose of building altars?" Both Noah and Abraham lived before the establishment of the tabernacle and before the institution of the sacrifice system. So why build God an altar? Should we still be doing so today?

Abraham built three altars as he moved about in the land. Each represented a place of consecration and a pledge of commitment to God. Do we still need to build a physical altar to worship God today? No. But we still need to consecrate ourselves to God. We still need to acknowledge our encounter with God and affirm our commitment to Him. We still need to respond to Him in worship.

By ignoring Scripture, the world believes Israel has no rights to the land. In 2016, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution condemning Israel for building settlements in East Jerusalem. On many of our university campuses,

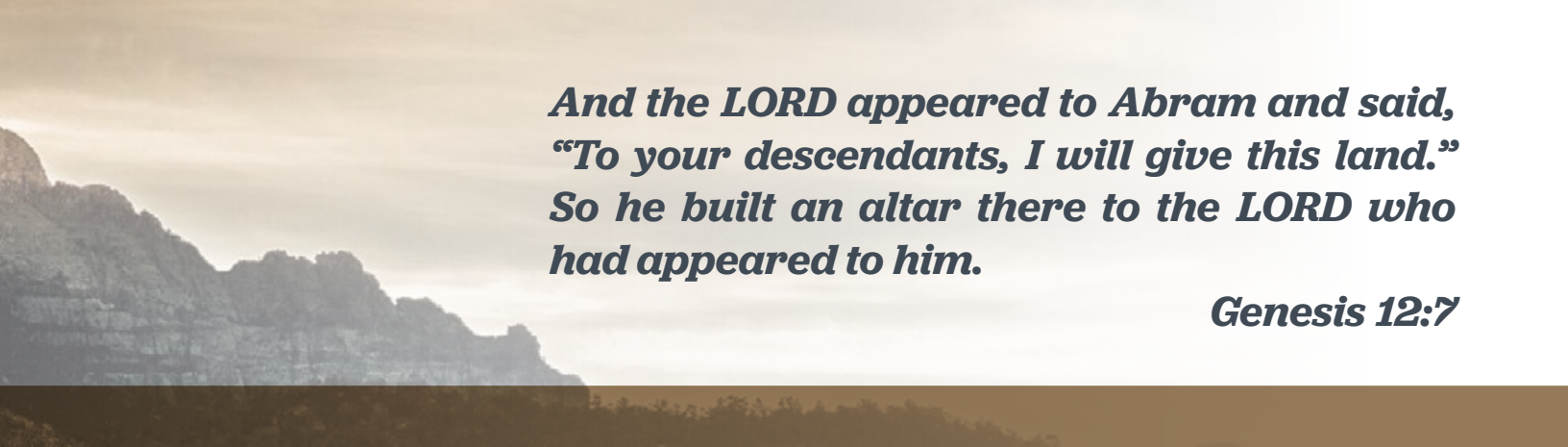
harsh criticism prevails against the nation of Israel. Israel is condemned for possessing land that God clearly gave to her. Too many pulpits in America preach replacement theology (wrongly believing the church has replaced Israel). Unfortunately, some entire denominations have embraced and endorsed the false doctrine of replacement theology. This is not an act of consecration. This is not an act of acknowledging an encounter with God.

Abraham's three altars offer insight into the covenant God established with Israel.

SHECHEM

Abraham built his first altar in Shechem in response to God revealing and confirming His promise of the land being given to his descendants (Israel).

Shechem was a place of commitment. Located southeast of Samaria, Shechem means "shoulder," which is appropriate as it is situated between two mountains, Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. It was on these two mountains the Israelites were told of God's covenantal relationship. At Shechem, Moses advised the Israelites to obey the Lord's commandments—choosing the blessings of God and avoiding the curse from turning away from Him (Deuteronomy 11:26-30). Forty years later, Joshua gathered the



***And the LORD appeared to Abram and said,
“To your descendants, I will give this land.”
So he built an altar there to the LORD who
had appeared to him.***

Genesis 12:7

nation of Israel back upon these two mountains. He reminded them again of God's Word before they entered the Promised Land of Canaan and challenged them to choose once again (Joshua 8:33, 24:1-15).

Shechem was a place of worship. After God appeared to him, Abram built an altar and worshiped the God almighty. Two generations later, Abram's grandson, Jacob, also built an altar and worshipped the Lord at this very site (Genesis 33:18-20).

BETHEL

The second place Abraham built an altar was just eleven miles north of Jerusalem in the much-traveled village of Bethel (Genesis 12:8). This site stood at a crossroads; its north-south road passed through the central hill country from Hebron in the south to Shechem in the north, and its main east-west route led from Jericho to the Mediterranean Sea. Because it was such a key location, only Jerusalem is mentioned more frequently than Bethel in the Old Testament.

Jacob gave Bethel its name after he encountered God in a vivid dream. As he was running from his brother Esau, Jacob fell asleep. The Lord spoke to Jacob in a vision of a stairway leading up into heaven and reaffirmed His promise of the land. Jacob witnessed angels moving up and down this ladder stretching from heaven to earth (Genesis 28:10-13).

When he woke from this amazing revelation he declared, "How awesome is this place!" (Genesis 28:17). As his grandfather did years earlier, Jacob set up a sacred pillar, consecrated this holy site, named the site Bethel, and worshipped the Lord.

HEBRON

The third site where Abraham built an altar was located just twenty miles south of Jerusalem at a place called Hebron. It was where Abraham relocated after parting ways with his nephew Lot (Genesis 13:18). Significantly, it was in Hebron that God showed Abraham all the land which would belong to him and his offspring (Genesis 13:14-17).

Abraham bought a field with a cave in Hebron to bury his wife Sarah (Genesis 23:17-20). In time, Abraham would also be laid to rest in the very same cave, as would Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Leah (Genesis 49:30-32). Because so many of Israel's patriarchs are buried in the sacred cave of the Patriarchs in Machpelah (Hebron), to this day, the Jews of Israel consider this the second holiest site in all of Israel, second only to Jerusalem.

Today Hebron and the other two sites are under Palestinian Authority control in the West Bank. Because Abraham was also the father of Ishmael, Muslims call this site the sanctuary of Abraham. Islam does not

acknowledge the other Jewish patriarchs also laid to rest in the depth of this cave which Abraham himself purchased. Indeed, Palestinian leaders are trying to blot out the history of the Jewish people in the land.

The "West Bank" is simply the portion of land located on the west side of the Jordan River that Jordan occupied after Israel's War of Independence in 1948. It came under Israeli control during the 1967 Six-Day War. There is probably no more disputed real estate on earth than this portion of the land of Israel.

OUR LIFE ON THE ALTAR

Even as we support the Jewish right to what God has promised, Christians can learn essential lessons from Abraham's three altars. We still must consecrate or dedicate ourselves to the worship and service of God. We still must acknowledge our encounters with God and worship Him in spirit and truth.

Each of us should ask the Lord what areas of our lives He wants us to offer up to Him. Then we can symbolically lay our sin, attitudes, and selfishness on the altar and ask God to continue to change our **hearts**.

We can also look forward to God's promise to dwell among His people in the land of Israel (Ezekiel 37:26-28). We can take Him at His Word! ♦

WHY DO CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?



DR. ALBERT MOHLER

Dr. Al Mohler is the President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. This article is excerpted from an episode of The Briefing, his daily commentary on the news from a Christian worldview. It is available on almohler.com.

As we approach Christmas, we need to understand how the Christian worldview comes together—where it starts.

Now, in one sense, we as Christians understand that it starts in Eternity, before the creation of the heavens and the earth by a Holy God, and before the creation of the first human beings, Adam and Eve. And it begins in the eternal purposes of a self-sufficient, sovereign, holy and righteous God. But [the Gospel] enters into history. Yes, the Gospel. The promise of the Gospel enters into human history in the very beginning of the biblical story in Genesis 1, 2, and 3.

First of all, in the Gospel of John in the first chapter, we are told that it was none other than Jesus Christ, the Son, the second person of the Trinity, who was the agent of creation, the eternal Word through whom the world was made, and without whom, nothing was made, that was made.

Genesis turns out to be Christological, and the book of Genesis turns out to be Trinitarian. That's the very be-

ginning of the biblical story. That's the foundation of biblical theology, and it just continues on.

We understand that in Genesis chapter 3, even in the account of the fall of humanity through the sin of Adam and Eve, there is the promise of a Son who would be born to Eve, who would crush the serpent's head. There's the promise of a Messiah, the promise of a Savior, the promise of One who would defeat the powers of sin and death and evil. Because it was God's promise, it's a sure promise, but it was a promise.

We follow through the Old Testament, and of course, we find prophecy and promise. We also find the experience of Israel. We find God making covenant with His people and establishing covenantal love as that which would take its ultimate fulfillment in the New Covenant that will be made in Jesus Christ—the covenant of salvation, the covenant of redemption. We come to understand the flow of biblical history and promise and fulfillment, and that brings us to Christmas. After all, as we arrive at Christmas, as we arrive at the celebration of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are entering into the point at which Jesus Christ enters into human history as human himself, truly God and truly man, who was born that day in Bethlehem's manger.

Now, as you think about the Christian celebration of Christmas, think about this for a moment. There are two

great moments that we celebrate every single year, one way or the other.

The Christian Church [celebrates] Christmas, the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Was Jesus Christ born in December? No, there's no evidence for that whatsoever. As a matter of fact, arguably, the biblical evidence would indicate that he was not born in December. Nonetheless, Christians began quite early to seize upon the opportunity of a winter celebration [of] the greatest news of all, that Jesus Christ is born. Even as the angel said unto the shepherds, "Behold, this day is born to you in the city of David, a savior who is Christ the Lord."

Of course, the other great Christian festival is the festival of Christ's resurrection from the dead. Evangelicals (we might even say *especially* evangelicals) seize upon these two celebrations. Even a secular culture has to take account of Christmas even more than it takes account of Easter, the festival of the resurrection. But Christians are making an astounding claim. We are claiming that history was actually split in two in the birth of a baby there in Judea, in the city of Bethlehem. That baby's birth becomes the hinge point in all of human history. Of course, that's reflected in the fact that we keep our calendar according to B.C., which is before Christ and A.D.

Now, in our secular age, have you noted the fact that there is a resistance to using B.C. and A.D. or Anno Domini, the year of our Lord? The pushback from the secularists is that it is an imposition of Christianity and thus, must be replaced with some other kind of nomenclature. Now, notice what happens. They declare that history is indeed split, but it's split between B.C.E. and C.E. They say "before common era" and "common era," but guess what? They start with the same calendar. They keep the same numbers, and so ironically enough, they have no explanation for why history should be split at that point other than the fact that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem.

If you're actually going to try to follow through with removing Jesus Christ from the calendar, then you can't just change B.C. to B.C.E. or A.D. to C.E. You've got to change the numbers, and it's rather foolish to think that you could do otherwise. Nevertheless, what we as Christians must recognize is that in our celebration of

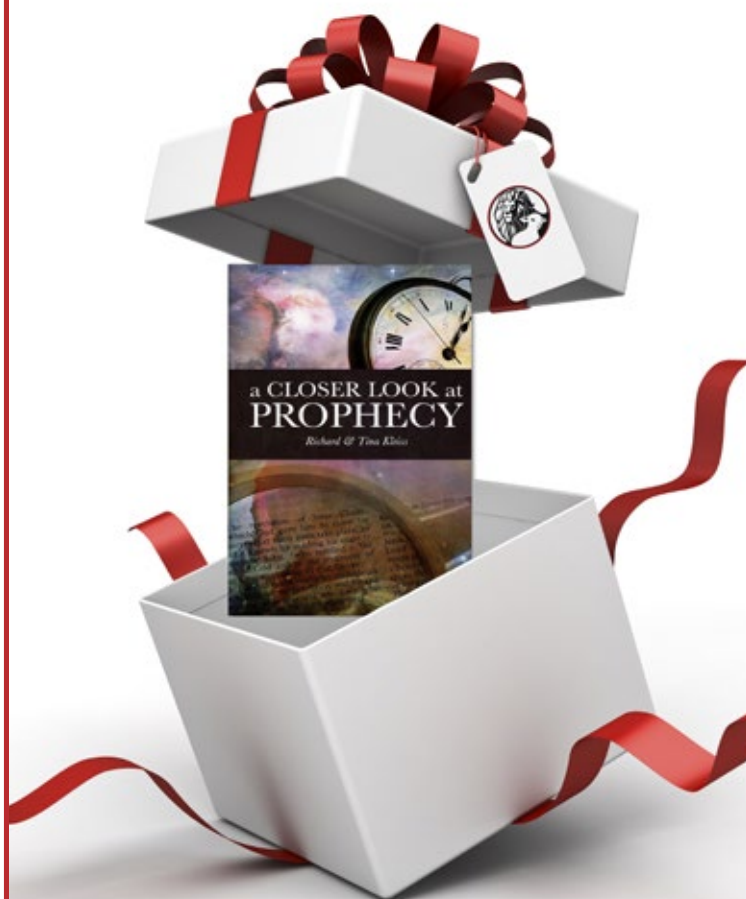
Christmas, we are actually celebrating history divided into two parts: everything that was meaningful before Christ and how everything has changed after Christ has come.

That's the entire point of having an Old Testament and a New Testament. It's not that there's not continuity between the two. It is to say that the Old promises the New, and the New fulfills the Promise, and that's exactly what we celebrate at Christmas. ♦

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**A CLOSER LOOK AT BIBLE PROPHECY
BY RICHARD & TINA KLEISS**

HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE?

TIM MOORE

Nathan Jones and I recently compared Christian role models from the recent past and quickly realized that we shared George Washington Carver as a noteworthy exemplar.

In an age when so much turmoil is roiling our society, Dr. Carver (an honorary title he resisted but eventually accepted) stands as a silent pillar of godly servanthood and character. I say silent because he was softspoken in life and because he has already gone on to be with the Lord. His life offers much that bears emulating.

George Washington Carver was born into slavery in Missouri in the early years of the Civil War. When he was only a week old he was kidnapped along with his mother and sister and sold in Kentucky. His master, Moses Carver was only able to locate baby George. He paid a ransom for the boy's return and raised him as his own child.

Gaining his freedom at the end of the Civil War, Carver was taught by a succession of benevolent Christians. Initially denied entrance to college, he homesteaded a claim in Kansas and began growing and studying plants on his own. Eventually Carver would attend Iowa State University, graduate, and become its first black professor.

In 1896, Booker T. Washington invited Carver to head the agriculture department of the newly founded Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. He not only became a noted member of the faculty, he enriched the local farming community with his proven methods of crop rotation and soil improvement. Carver leapt to national fame with his revolutionary research into the peanut, at one point demonstrating 145 different products developed from peanuts.

In 1920 he spoke before the Young Men's Christian Association in Blue Ridge, North Carolina. He explained his discoveries about the peanut this way:

Years ago I went into my laboratory and said, "Dear Mr. Creator, please tell me what the universe was made for?" The Great Creator answered, "You want to know too much for that little mind of yours. Ask for something more your size, little man."

Then I asked, "Please, Mr. Creator, tell me what man was made for." Again the Great Creator replied, "You are still asking too much. Cut down on the extent and improve the intent."



So then I asked, "Please, Mr. Creator, will you tell me why the peanut was made?"

"That's better, but even then it's infinite. What do you want to know about the peanut?"

Carver described how he asked God to show him how to use the peanut to bless mankind. He testified, "And then the Great Creator taught me to take the peanut apart and put it together again. And out of the process have come forth all these products!"

In 1921, he was invited to address the House Ways and Means Committee. China was dumping cheap peanuts on the American market, threatening American farmers with ruin. In the era of segregation, Carver's presence created a stir in Congress. Offered 10 minutes to speak, his presentation on the peanut was so fascinating that the chairman told him to take all the time he wanted.

When he finished an hour and forty-five minutes lat-

LIFE LESSONS FROM A CHRISTIAN EXEMPLAR

er, he was asked how he had learned all these things about the peanut. "From an old book," he responded. "What book?" asked the Chairman. Carver replied, "the Bible." The Chairman inquired, "Does the Bible tell about peanuts?" "No, Sir," Dr. Carver replied. "But it tells about the God who made the peanut. I asked Him to show me what to do with the peanut, and He did."

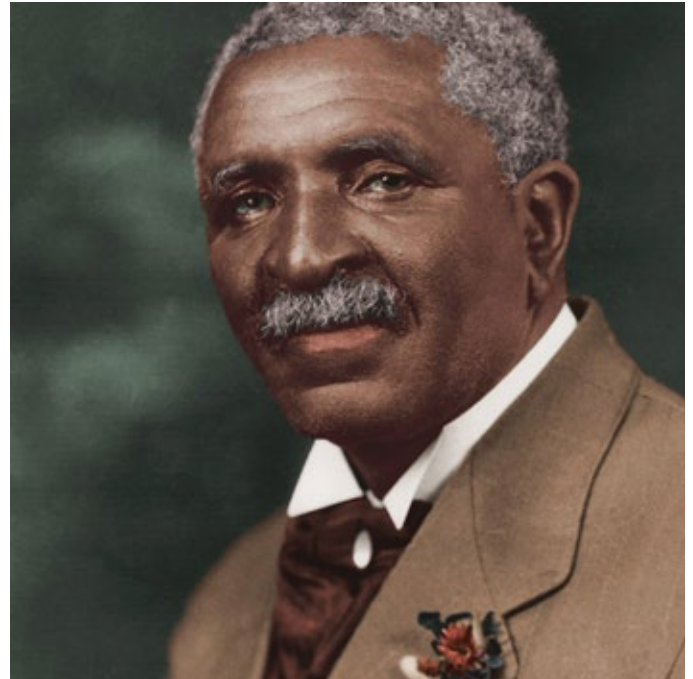
George Washington Carver took the Lord at His Word—literally.

He once wrote, "My beloved friend, keep your hand in that of the Master, walk daily by His side, so that you may lead others in the realms of true happiness, where a religion of hate, (which poisons both body and soul) will be unknown, having in its place the 'Golden Rule Way', which is the 'Jesus Way' of life."

In addition to his classes on agriculture, Carver also taught Bible classes on Sunday. His fervent faith in Jesus Christ led him to develop eight cardinal virtues for his student's character development:

- **BE CLEAN BOTH INSIDE AND OUT**
- **NEITHER LOOK UP TO THE RICH NOR DOWN ON THE POOR**
- **LOSE, IF NEED BE, WITHOUT SQUEALING**
- **WIN WITHOUT BRAGGING**
- **ALWAYS BE CONSIDERATE OF WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND OLDER PEOPLE**
- **BE TOO BRAVE TO LIE**
- **BE TOO GENEROUS TO CHEAT**
- **TAKE YOUR SHARE OF THE WORLD AND LET OTHERS TAKE THEIRS**

Strikingly, in the early 1900s Carver shared his botanical insights with black and white farmers equally. In a letter dated March 24, 1925, he testified, "Thank God I love humanity; complexion doesn't interest me one single bit."



Even before his death, George Washington Carver's reputation was well-known. In 1939 he received the Roosevelt Medal, dedicated "To a scientist humbly seeking the guidance of God and a liberator to men of the white race as well as the black."

Upon Carver's death, Senator Harry Truman sponsored a bill to erect a monument to this great American. Even as World War II raged, the bill passed unanimously and a considerable sum was devoted to the monument.

As America wrestles with racial division and the concept of humility is foreign to the self-absorbed masses, George Washington Carver exemplifies one who followed Micah's counsel:

**HE HAS TOLD YOU, O MAN, WHAT IS GOOD:
WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU
BUT TO DO JUSTICE,
TO LOVE KINDNESS, AND TO
WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD?
MICAH 6:8**

How then should we live? According to the model offered by this humble, godly man. ♦

MINISTRY MAILBOX

TIM MOORE



From time to time, we're going to address some of the questions that come to us in the mail or through e-mail.

Nathan Jones, our Internet Evangelist, engages with people every day. Our Ministry Evangelists address many questions through our periodic streaming conferences. We think this kind of interaction would be a good addition to the *Lamplighter*, as well.

This month's question comes from one of our Prophecy Partners, Bill B. in Pennsylvania. He asks:

Is it possible that New York City could be the Mystery Babylon spoken of in Revelation?

Thanks for reaching out to us, Bill! Your question raises some interesting considerations.

Until recent years, Bible prophecy experts generally agreed that the "Mystery Babylon" of Revelation 17 refers to Rome. Given the hostility of the Roman Empire to Christianity when John wrote Revelation (and the later hostility of the Roman Catholic papacy to biblically faithful Christianity), it was thought that John's mysterious reference pointed to that city of seven hills. Rome was the spiritual center of Christendom throughout most of the church age—although some argued that John was speaking of Jerusalem.

Bill Salus was an early advocate of New York City as Mystery Babylon. Prior to the ascendancy of this great economic and cultural center in America, Rome and the ancient city of Babylon were the leading candidates (with London mentioned in some circles for a time).

Recently, that consensus has shifted back to ancient Babylon—perhaps as a result of the changing tide of history as Israel was reestablished and the Middle East once again became the focus of geopolitics. As Tim LaHaye envisioned in his *Left Behind* series (co-authored with Jerry Jenkins), many experts now believe the An-

tichrist will establish his world headquarters in a rebuilt city of Babylon.

The Bible says that Babylon will be destroyed in "the day of the Lord" (Isaiah 13:6, 9). Such destruction is predicated on a rebuilt city. Isaiah also says that the king of Babylon will be an oppressor of unparalleled ruthlessness—a figure many identify as the Antichrist (14:1-7). Revelation 17 associates end-time apostate religion with Babylon and chapter 18 ties the political empire of the Antichrist to Babylon. Revelation 18:8 and 10 say the city will be destroyed in a single hour of one day.

The reference to apostate religion leads many prophecy experts to prefer Rome (or New York) as a leading candidate. And, the word "Mystery" that John uses as a prefix when describing the future Antichrist's capital suggests that Babylon is symbolic instead of literal.

In the end, as I shared with Bill personally, not only do I think we cannot know now exactly where Mystery Babylon is—I don't believe it matters. That is because I think that there will be such economic upheaval in the world following the Rapture that nations will rise and fall.

The Antichrist will emerge out of the chaos and Scripture is clear that he will consolidate his power in the region formerly known as the Roman Empire. Whether New York will be an economic center or not remains to be seen. But for those of us who are caught up in the twinkling of an eye to be with the Lord, it will not matter. We will go with Him to enjoy the Marriage Supper of the Lamb while the earth heads into the period known as the Tribulation.

While the exact identity of Babylon may be a mystery, the identity of God's Anointed, the Messiah is not.

Put your trust in Jesus Christ right now and flee from the wrath of God to come! ♦

*For a full discussion of Mystery Babylon, visit:
christinprophecy.org/articles/mystery*

GIVING IN *The Season* OF THE LORD'S RETURN



DR. PATRICK OLIVER

Understanding Bible prophecy and discerning the signs of the times indicates we are in the season of the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The signs of nature (Luke 21:11), the condition of society (2 Timothy 3:1-4), the spiritual condition of the church (2 Timothy 4:3-4), the state of world politics (Matt 24:6-7), technology (Luke 21:26), and most importantly Israel being back in her land (Zechariah 12:3), all shout the message that He is coming soon. Given that fact, we should all consider how living in the season of the Lord's return should impact our giving. As Christians we need to live with an eternal perspective.

BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

Biblical stewardship requires the handling of time, talents, and trea-

asures according to the instructions of God. The foundational principle of biblical stewardship is that "God owns it all." If you keep all of it or hold something back, then you are acting as the owner. Giving cheerfully to God engages both His blessings to a faithful steward and His hedge of protection. Jesus also gave several warnings about the sin of materialism. "And He said to them, 'Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions'" (Luke 12:15).

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

The meaning of the word tithe is "the tenth part." Today, some Christians use the word tithe to describe all giving to the church. You can give 3%, 5%, or 7% of your income, but you can't tithe unless it is at least 10%. The tithe represents the least portion a person should return to God and not the maximum. Leviticus

27:30 states, "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD." There are three key applications of the tithe here; it "belongs to the LORD", it is "holy", and is "set apart" to be presented to God, and therefore not used for any other purpose.

I believe that tithing is not part of the Law because the practice began long before the Law was given to Moses. Abraham tithed to the high priest, Melchizedek, (Genesis 14:20) 430 years before the law was given to Moses. Jacob promised a tithe to the LORD (Genesis 28:22). This principle of giving back to God who blesses us represents what is best for the people of God, at all times, under all circumstances.

Every individual or family operates on one of four levels of financial giving. The first level of giving is offerings—any giving that is less than



FOR FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST LIVING IN THE SEASON OF THE LORD'S RETURN, THE TIME TO GIVE IS GROWING SHORTER EVERY DAY.

10% of your increase or income. The second level of giving is to give 10%, which is the tithe. I believe biblically this belongs to the church. The third level of giving is tithes and offering.

This means that beyond the tithe, offerings are given to the church, Christ-centered ministries, or the poor, needy, widows, and orphans. This level of giving is described in the book of Malachi.

The fourth and final level of giving is proportional giving, which increases as God prospers us financially. When God provides additional financial resources, we increase our giving to the church, Christ-centered organizations, and individuals to even higher percentages. Paul lauded such giving by the believers in Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:2).

HOW NOW SHOULD WE GIVE?

In Matthew Chapter 6, Jesus provides some important instructions on biblical stewardship that we all should understand. Jesus tells us: "Do not store up for yourself trea-

asures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal."

**BUT STORE UP
FOR YOURSELVES
TREASURES IN HEAVEN,
WHERE NEITHER MOTH
NOR RUST DESTROYS,
AND WHERE THIEVES
DO NOT BREAK IN OR
STEAL; FOR WHERE
YOUR TREASURE IS,
THERE YOUR HEART
WILL BE ALSO.**

MATTHEW 6:20-21

Why are earthly investments so fleeting? Because your wealth on earth is temporary. It will leave you while you live, or you will leave it when you die.

The Bible contains 2,350 verses that discuss the handling of money or possessions. I believe money is mentioned so much because it is the number one competitor with Jesus Christ for our love and devotion. Je-

sus himself said, "No one can serve two masters; for he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money" (Matthew 6:24).

There is a strong relationship between how someone handles money and how they live out the Christian life. How you handle money is an external visible indicator of the condition of your heart and your relationship with Christ. Therefore, it is important to know that how you handle money is a spiritual matter of the heart. Proverbs 27:19 indicates, "As water reflects the face, so a man's heart reveals the man."

In this season of the Lord's return, we should increase our giving because of the imminent expectation of the Lord's return for the Church. A good question to ask yourself is, are you storing up money beyond what you need or what is reasonable? We as Christians need to pray about this and do as the Holy Spirit leads us.

The Lord considers our motives and our means when we give, just as He did the poor widow who gave all she had in Mark 12:43-44. He offers us this important warning, "If you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?" (Luke 16:11).

For followers of Jesus Christ living in the season of the Lord's return, the time to give is growing shorter every day. ♦

Dr. Patrick Oliver is an Assistant Evangelist to Lamb & Lion Ministries and is available for speaking engagements. For his complete bio, visit our staff page at LambLion.com.

PAYING IT FORWARD | TIM MOORE



As Patrick Oliver explained, our stewardship of the blessings the Lord pours into our lives says a lot about our relationship with Him. Do we trust in Him—or do we trust in our checking account or 401K?

Lamb & Lion Ministries operates as a faith-based ministry. We never know exactly how many dollars will flow our way. But we trust God to provide everything we need to serve Him as He directs. He has proven faithful time and time again.

Lamb & Lion has also been intentional about sharing the Lord's bounty with other like-minded ministries. We've helped launch sister ministries focusing on proclaiming the Lord's soon return. We support evangelistic outreach to Jewish people in general and those in Israel specifically. In short, we are dedicated to paying it forward by tithing on our own ministry revenue.

We could not fulfill our own mission without dedicated supporters. Prophecy Partners are co-laborers in that work because they commit to prayer and financial support.

As this year draws to a close, if the Lord has laid it on your heart to

leverage more dollars toward His kingdom, we hope you'll consider allowing Lamb & Lion Ministries to be a conduit of your blessing to people who need to hear about Jesus. Help us warn unbelievers to flee from the wrath to come—and into the loving arms of our Savior.

OUR MISSION:

**TO PROCLAIM THE
SOON RETURN
OF JESUS TO AS
MANY AS POSSIBLE,
AS QUICKLY AS
POSSIBLE**

Each year, some folks donate appreciated assets like stocks and mutual fund shares. The advantage is that the ministry gets the full value of that asset. The giver avoids capital gains tax even though the full amount is still tax deductible. Several times a year we are also informed that a Partner has arranged for Lamb & Lion to receive part of their estate, meaning that they are paying it forward and touching lives even after their own homegoing.

If you have any questions about

the options for stewarding the blessings God has poured into your life, talk to your financial advisor or call our CFO, Reva Frye.

Finally, to expand the ways you can play a part in fulfilling our mission, I'm announcing two new opportunities. Help us proclaim Jesus' soon return by sponsoring additional Prophecy Partners or subscribers. For only \$25, you can send the *Lamplighter* to someone unfamiliar with Lamb & Lion for a year, or you may sponsor a loved one as a Prophecy Partner for \$300 (includes magazine). Either way, we'll notify them of the gift you are providing. After being exposed to our message and ministry for a year, they can choose whether to continue. Please contact our ministry at 972-736-3567 to participate in this endeavor.

With over 3,600 Prophecy Partners and 2,300 print magazine subscribers, if even half of you gifted one person a year, our exposure would grow exponentially. Our ministry team works tirelessly to fulfill our mission statement, but all of you who are truly a part of this ministry can partner with us in that effort as well—to God's everlasting glory. ♦

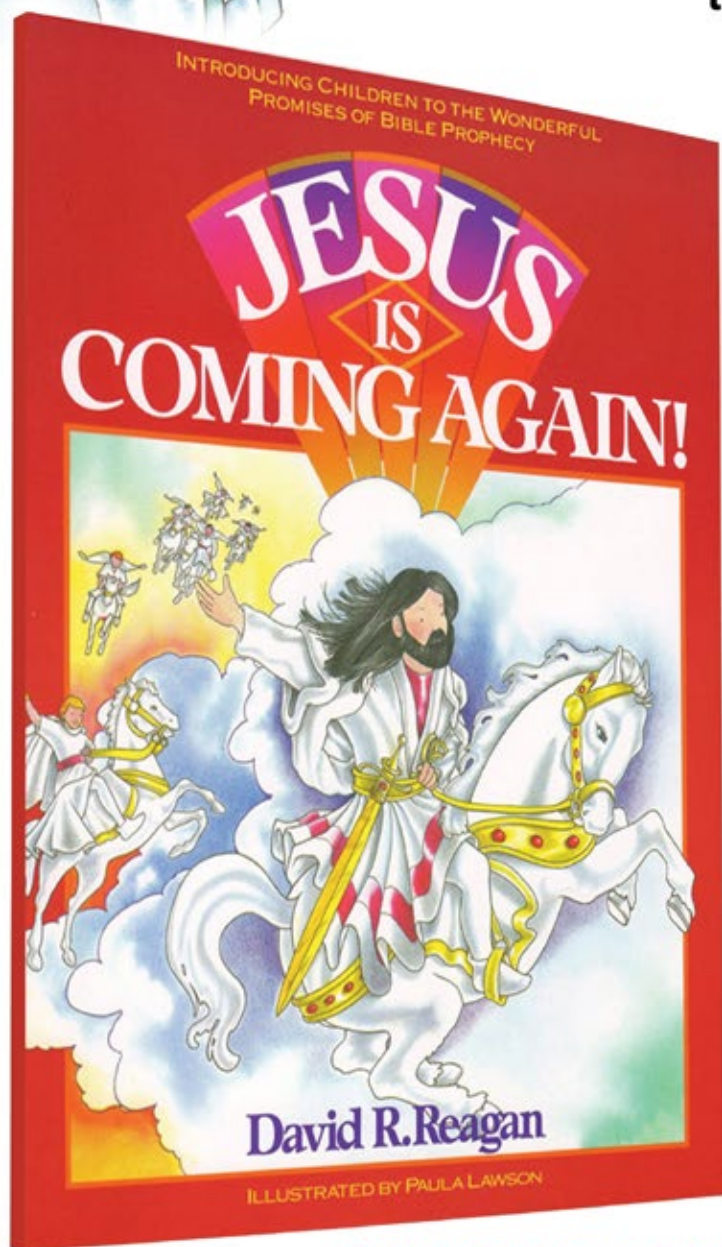


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Lamb & Lion Ministries is a non-profit, 501(c)3 evangelical Christian ministry. Our mission is proclaim the soon return of Jesus Christ to as many as possible, as soon as possible. We do not claim to know the day or hour of the Lord's return, but do believe we can recognize the season of the Lord's return. It is our conviction we are living in that season.