

Prophecy is like a lamp shining in a dark place. 2 Peter 1:19

NOV/DEC 2025

LAMPLIGHTER

A LAMB & LION PUBLICATION

THE HOPES AND FEARS OF ALL THE YEARS MET IN

HIM



LAMB & LION MINISTRIES

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025

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OBSERVATIONS FROM THE EDITOR

Hopes were high among avid prophecy pundits that the Rapture would occur in September, near the Feast of Trumpets. I do not begrudge those who are hopeful for Jesus to return; Lamb & Lion Ministries has been proclaiming the imminence of His coming for 45 years. But the fact that we're still here demonstrates the fallacy of the date-setters.

The reality is that as fears multiply—of rising threats, of growing evil, and of gathering gloom—hopes that have been growing for almost 2,000 years seem close enough to touch. Those who live expecting Jesus to come will keep hoping until the trumpet sounds, the archangel shouts, and He breaks from the heavens.

In the long years prior to His first Advent, there was growing Messianic fervor. Jews, tired of foreign oppression and eager to see God's promises to Israel fulfilled, were "looking for the redemption of Israel" (Luke 2:38). Those waiting for a military commander or a political prince missed the arrival of the Baby born in Bethlehem.

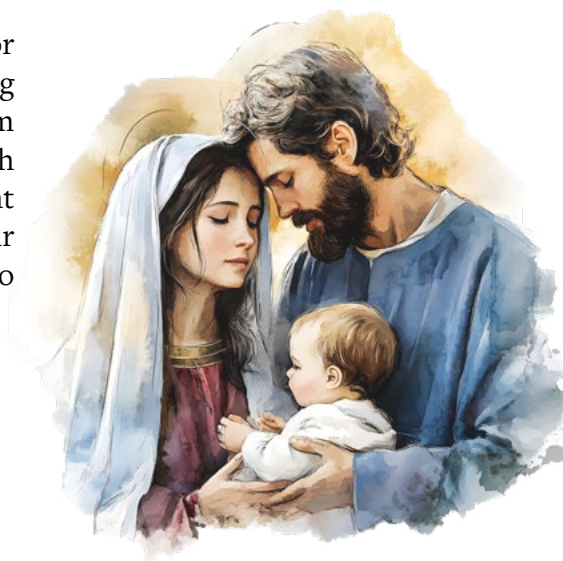
Even today, many clamor for heaven on earth while rejecting the One Who already came from Heaven as Immanuel—God with us. Others seek a savior to right the world's wrongs, but deny their own sin and refuse to be subject to a Lord.

Christ's return is indeed imminent. The signs pointing to His soon return are multiplying and converging. His Light will pierce the darkness—rescuing those who have trusted in Him and unleashing the wrath of God on those who are left behind. It is that great sifting that is causing hopes and fears alike to multiply.

Once again, "the hopes and fears of all the years" are met in Jesus Christ—the Holy One of Israel.



Tim Moore
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The Lamplighter will utilize the NASB or LSB translations interchangeably, and note when other translations are referenced.



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located in this edition of the *Lamplighter*.



BETHLEHEM

LITTLE CITY OF SPIRITUAL BATTLE

Tim Moore

M*ay you live in interesting times.*

I've referenced that proverbial statement more than once as a curse veiled within a blessing. The insinuation is that "interesting times" are often perilous, or at least filled with uncertainty. Most people prefer to live quiet, predictable lives. Some even become quite flustered when someone moves their cheese.

But, as Bob Dylan proclaimed in a song filled with Bible prophecy allusions, "the times, they are a-changin'."

Even the increasing frequency and intensity of the Signs of the Times was foretold—as were the wars and

rumors of wars, societal upheaval, and dread that fills the hearts of those who do not understand the times. However, for students of God's Word, none of the changes should come as a surprise. Like the sons of Issachar, we have understanding that transcends human knowledge—and peace that passes understanding.

With that in mind, Bethlehem stands as a living memorial to the battle that rages on the earth. The ancient City of David, which was a quiet little town off the beaten path 2,000 years ago, is still a primary battle site. Let's learn the lesson of Bethlehem—and gain wisdom from the truths it reveals.



Site of a Census

We all know that while Mary was pregnant with Jesus, Caesar Augustus mandated a census throughout the Roman world. Unlike our decennial census required by the Constitution to determine congressional representation, the Roman census was undertaken to ensure tax compliance. Joseph obligingly trekked to Bethlehem with his betrothed wife, Mary, because he was a descendant of David.

City of David

Bethlehem is first mentioned in Genesis 35 as the place where Jacob's beloved wife, Rachel, was buried. Rachel's name means "ewe"—a female sheep. The name is intended to convey gentleness and the blessing of fertility, which is ironic, given that Rachel's womb remained closed as her sister Leah began to bear Jacob's children.

Several generations later, Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer who took Ruth the Moabitess as his wife, lived in Bethlehem. The scenes of Ruth foraging grain from the fields near Bethlehem explain why Bethlehem was named "house of bread." This side of the Incarnation, we recognize that Boaz foreshadowed our great Kinsman-Redeemer, who has chosen a (largely) Gentile Bride in the form of the Church as He redeems those who were once outcast and hopeless. (Even Naomi foreshadows the restored joy of the forlorn Jews once they see the love expressed by the Redeemer for His Gentile bride.)

By the time that Boaz's grandson, Jesse, was raising boys in the vicinity of Bethlehem, the city was

also known for its shepherds and their flocks. This would continue through the time of Christ. Brock and Bodie Thoene have incorporated the site of Migdal Eder ("tower of the flock"), mentioned in Genesis 35 and Micah 4:8 into *The A.D. Chronicles*, their fictional series built around the true, historical account of the life and ministry of Christ. Their research indicates that in Jesus' time, temple lambs would have been bred and born in the vicinity of Bethlehem—often swaddled at birth to prevent injury that would have rendered them unsuitable for sacrifice.

This is another example of God's prophetic will working through the most unlikely of circumstances. For most Jews, the requirement to travel to their birthplace or ancestral home would have been an inconvenience to add to their resentment of Roman oversight. But in the providence of God, the dictates of an authoritarian pagan ruler ensured the perfect fulfillment of what He had already declared.

Much has been written and preached regarding the lack of room in the inn when Jesus' earthly parents arrived in Bethlehem. To our sensibilities, it seems cold-hearted

And as for you, tower of the flock,
hill of the daughter of Zion, to you
it will come—even the former
dominion will come, the kingdom
of the daughter of Jerusalem.

Micah 4:8





to turn away a pregnant woman about to give birth. But whether the innkeeper was reluctant to render his establishment unclean (and therefore unrentable) by the issue of blood involved in childbirth or whether the influx of people had actually overwhelmed the little town, Mary and Joseph were relegated to a stable.

To cite Bodie Thoene, “Everything means something.”

God did not ordain that His Son would be born in a palace or amidst the high and mighty. He willed that Jesus’ birthplace would be as humble as the Messiah Himself. Surrounded by beasts, welcomed by a virgin mother and carpenter father, and worshiped by lowly shepherds, Jesus’ arrival was ignored by the hoity-toity and the hoi polloi alike. But His arrival was indeed noted by others.

Although our nativity scenes are replete with representative wise men, it is likely that the Wise Men from the East did not arrive for many weeks or months. Coming from the territory of the former Babylonian Empire, they had been anticipating

the arrival of a Jewish Messiah-King because they were students of Daniel’s prophecies. These magi from the Orient watched while they waited expectantly, and observed signs in the heavens that alerted them to Jesus’ birth.

Scripture records that they followed the Star (whether supernatural or a convergence of stars and planets) to arrive in Jerusalem. Their inquiries about the Messiah’s birth created quite a stir—revealing that prior to their arrival, no one in the Jewish capital had even been aware of His birth. Herod quickly invited them to his palace to determine the nature of their quest (not

because he was devout or eager to worship, but because he was wary of any threat to his own closely-guarded power). When he made inquiries of the chief priests and scribes, they were well-versed in the biblical prophecies focused on the Jewish Messiah: He would be born in Bethlehem, the City of David.

But even as the foreign Magi arrived eager to find and worship the newborn Messiah, Scripture does not record that a single priest or scribe bothered to go with them the handful of miles to see for themselves. In the words of James (1:22-25), they were not “doers of the word, [but] merely hearers who delude themselves.”

A Rising Threat

As much upheaval as the news of Jesus’ birth caused in Jerusalem, there was another realm that was thrown into absolute revulsion and chaos: the spiritual realm.

Just like the Jewish chief priests and scribes, Satan knew that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem; he just did not know when. Immediately after Jesus was born, Satan must have been prevented from threatening the newborn and His parents. But the Magi’s arrival



“A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she was refusing to be comforted, because they were no more.”

Matthew 2:18



in Jerusalem presented an opportunity to steer Herod's paranoid and wicked heart to commit a great evil—one that was also prophetically foretold.

Upon learning exactly when the star appeared to guide the Wise Men toward Judea, Herod tried to manipulate them to return and disclose the Child's exact location. When they left the area by another route (having been warned by God to avoid Herod and his schemes), the self-proclaimed Idumean king of the Jews became enraged. Herod ordered the massacre of all the male children in the vicinity of Bethlehem under two years old, indicating that his inquiry had led him to believe that Jesus was probably one to two years old.

Jeremiah's tragic prophecy was fulfilled: “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be comforted, because they were no more” (Matthew 2:18, citing Jeremiah 31:15). The resting place of Rachel was soaked in innocent blood, but Joseph had been warned to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt to flee the carnage—setting up the fulfillment of yet another prophecy (Matthew 2:13-15).

Hope Turns to Fear

Following the birth of Jesus and the Holy Family's escape, Bethlehem is not mentioned again in the pages of Scripture. But it has remained a touchstone to people of many faiths.

It is well known that Emperor Constantine's mother, Helena, visited the Holy Land in about 325 AD and designated various sites related to key events in the life of Christ. There is some evidence that the Early Church tradition would have already recognized legitimate locations and even worshiped in the vicinity of Jesus' birthplace (Bethlehem), hometown (Nazareth), ministry headquarters (Capernaum), and the Crucifixion site (Golgotha). But it may have been difficult to determine the exact location of His birth, even 35 or 40 years after the First Advent, when early Christians began to congregate at the locations described in the Gospels.

It is also recorded that prior to the Roman emperor embracing Christianity, other rulers had attempted to eradicate Christian faith in its very birthplace. In 135 AD, Emperor Hadrian had ordered a temple to Adonis to be erected

in the place where Jesus was born. He even commanded that a sacred grove be planted to obliterate the memory of the supposed Jewish Messiah. Yet over 100 years later, Origen (a Church Father from Alexandria) would reference Bethlehem as the place where “He was born, and the manger in the cave where He was wrapped in swaddling clothes”—citing a particular cave still identifiable in the city.

Based on his mother's report, Constantine directed a basilica (church) to be built. It was dedicated on May 31, 339. Subsequently destroyed by fire, Emperor Justinian built a new basilica in the mid-500s.



An Orthodox painting of Emperor Constantine and his mother, Helena



Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem

That structure formed the basis of the Church of the Nativity, which is still in Bethlehem today. But it was doomed to a long progression of claims and counterclaims by people of various Christian persuasions and even different faiths.

The first foreign assault in the Christian era occurred in the 600s, when a Persian army invaded Palestine (the insulting name the Romans gave Israel following the First Century Jewish revolts). Still, some traditions were spared. Legend has it that the Persian commander Shahrbaraz decided not to raze the church because three magi wearing Persian clothing were depicted above its entry door.

Following the Crusader period (in the 1100s), the city and the church were the contested property of first one, then another king, emperor, or sultan. While the Islamic Ottoman Empire controlled territory throughout the western Mediterranean, the church was repeatedly desecrated. Even today, visitors note that the primary entry door is surprisingly small—a measure taken to prevent Ottoman soldiers from riding their horses into the church.

Today, the Church of the Nativity is almost as dark and foreboding as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Division and rancor mark the relationships between the priests and

advocates of the different Christian sects that claim to revere the site. That acrimony became so pitched and violent that in 1757, the Muslim overlord of Palestine enacted what is known as the Status Quo, stipulating that all denominational boundaries at nine Christian sites would be frozen in place. Recognized in subsequent European treaties, the Status Quo boundaries are still observed today.

That brief history lesson is meant to convey the (sometimes misguided) reverence given to the city and site of Jesus' birth by Christians, and the disregard offered by those who have different allegiances. Even though Muslims are taught that Jesus was a prophet and should be honored as such, they vehemently reject Christian belief in His divine nature and supernatural conception. And the Muslims living in Israel have become passionately revisionist about the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth.

Jesus as Palestinian

As Islam came to dominate the Middle East, various Christian enclaves diminished or were overwhelmed and eradicated. That included the scholarly Christian bastions of Alexandria, Damascus, and Aleppo. I know that sizable Christian minorities remain in those locations still today (at least until the Syrian civil war and the rise of ISIS decimated the Syrian Church), but the Christian center moved markedly West. That fact is demonstrated by the renaming of Constantinople (the Eastern capital of the Orthodox Church) as Istanbul, a markedly Muslim city today.

With regard to Bethlehem, a significant Christian population re-



mained as well until very recent times. Most of the Palestinian Arabs living in Bethlehem (86%) claimed a Christian heritage as recently as 1950, but that majority has dwindled today to less than 10% in the face of relentless Muslim hostility. There seems to be a compulsion on the part of Muslims to seize—or at least attempt to assert their superiority at—Christian holy sites. It is the reason the loudest (and longest) Muslim call to prayer in Israel is blared from the loudspeakers of the minaret erected immediately adjacent to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Muslims forget that although the adhan (call to prayer) is loud enough to wake the dead, Jesus has already risen! (That desire to mark territory and gain ascendancy also explains the Muslim attempt to erect a mosque at the 9/11 site of the Twin Towers.) That drive to deny and destroy is evident in Bethlehem.

Even now, the remaining Christians in Bethlehem can point to Bethlehem University (Catholic) and Bethlehem Bible College (Evangelical). But like many self-described Christians throughout Europe and the Western hemisphere today, Christian identity is something most Palestinian Arabs see as a heritage, not a thriving faith or personal relationship.

A dear friend was once invited to Bethlehem Bible College to consider possible teaching opportunities. During his meeting with the president and staff, while also on a pilgrimage trip, his hosts took offense when he referred to Israel as Israel. The Arab Christians expressed great displeasure and counseled him never to refer to the land of Palestine by that odious name (Israel). Their reverence for the Word



of God and His promises to the people and the Land of Israel was trumped by their Palestinian Arab nationalism. My friend realized that he would not be able to teach the full counsel of God's Word in such a place.

Even now, widespread propaganda is asserting that Jesus was a Palestinian. Tragically, some professing Christ-followers have embraced virulent antisemitism, distorting His Jewish identity and denying God's covenantal promises to Israel.

One episode conveys this animosity better than any other I know.

In the 1990s, a rash of terrorist attacks wracked Israel as Palestinians sought to inflict great pain and suffering on the Jewish people. After one callous attack on Jewish civilians (always the softest target for terrorists), a band of Arabs fled toward Bethlehem and rushed into the Church of the Nativity. For a number of days, the IDF endeavored to draw the terrorists out of the church without actually storming the building. They followed

classic hostage protocol, with loud music, bright lights, and round-the-clock negotiations. Eventually, IDF snipers exchanged gunfire with the terrorists as they fired from inside the church.

Finally, a deal was struck whereby the terrorists would be allowed to travel unimpeded to Gaza. They arrived in the strip of land now controlled by Hamas and were welcomed as heroes. After their departure, the priests and monks administering the Church of the Nativity discovered bombs and booby traps left behind by the terrorists. They were forced to request the assistance of IDF sappers (bomb disposal experts) to defuse and remove the threatening devices.

Before reopening the church as a major tourist attraction, the "Christian" caretakers of the Church of the Nativity held a special service to ceremonially cleanse the building from the presence of the Jews. That reprehensible attitude (and the fact that the mafia-like Palestinian Authority controls Bethlehem) is why Lamb & Lion Ministries no longer goes there during



Pilgrimage trips. That, and the fact that my Jewish guide is likely to be targeted and killed if he dares to visit Bethlehem.

There are faithful Christians in Bethlehem. I know some of them personally. But the city is in the clutches of thugs who justify their hatred as part of their religious fervor. That Satanic ideology has even infected many who claim to follow Jesus but reject His Jewishness and deny His faithfulness to His covenant with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When even the name Israel is repugnant to those who call themselves Christian, it is obvious that they are worshipping a false Christ.

But that attitude is growing more widespread by the day.

Bethlehem as a Symbol of Rising Darkness

Every Christmas, Christians around the world will sing carols describing the Nativity. They will display creches that include Jesus and His earthly parents, along with animals, shepherds, wise men, and angels (co-mingling the various players who are described by

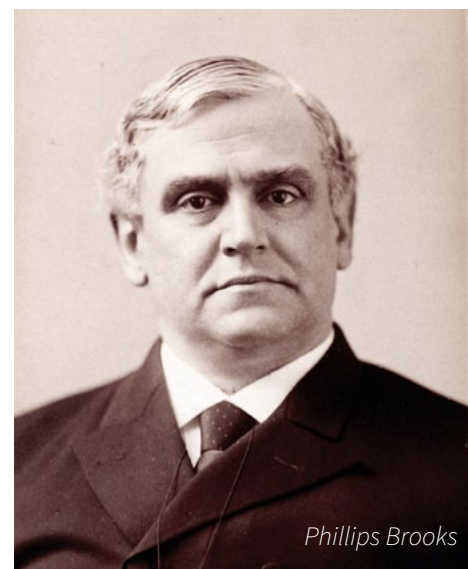
Matthew and Luke, although compressing the timeline of their worshipful visits). They will even wistfully imagine the little town where Jesus was born and try to picture the still pastures and dark streets of Jesus' birthplace.

Simultaneously, too many of them will buy into the lie that Jesus was Palestinian—or at least far removed from the Jewish people and nation of Israel we know today. Instead of sharing His love for Jews and Gentiles alike, they have—either subconsciously or intentionally—decided that the Church has replaced Israel in the everlasting covenant established by God. Such a theology flies in the face of Paul's writings in Romans 9-11 and the entire sweep of God's Word.

Why is this spiritual battle for the hearts and minds of Christians (let alone the attitude and prejudices of the unbelieving world) raging? Because Satan knows his time is short. He can discern the same signs of the times you and I should recognize—and he knows Bible prophecy. He—perhaps more than any mortal creature—takes God at His Word, even though he is trying desperately to thwart God's will and nullify His

promises. Satan believes that if he can eradicate the Jews (something Haman, Herod, Hitler, and Hamas tried to do at different times in human history), he can prove God a liar. Although many will fall to his deceptions, the Devil will fail in that wicked endeavor.

When Phillips Brooks wrote the beloved carol, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, he captured the desperate hope of every heart that cowers in darkness—even if ignorant of the Light. Everlasting Light shone in the little town, whose streets lay dark and still, and whose inhabitants slept deep and dreamlessly.



The battle between Darkness and Light rages still today. But to all who call on Him, the Holy Child of Bethlehem will cast out sin and enter in, causing a dark heart to be born again.

Brooks' song ends with a longing cry for Christ to descend again. When He does—coming first for His Church and then to reign on the Earth—He will abide with us as Emmanuel, God with us, forever and ever.

Fear not, people of Bethlehem! Our Blessed Hope is coming soon! ✨



THE CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL

Meg Price

Years ago, in my high school choir's Christmas program, a fellow student was given a solo that had been written by our choir director, echoing the words of Simeon, who was described in Luke 2 as a righteous and devout man, "waiting for the Consolation of Israel." When he beheld Jesus, Simeon said, "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation that You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and *for glory to Your people Israel.*" I still sing those powerful words each Christmas season.

After Simeon blessed the Lord, he blessed Joseph and Mary, who had brought Jesus to the Temple to present Him to the Lord (and isn't that something to ponder—God the Son, having just been wrapped in human flesh, being brought to the Temple to be presented to God, His Father). We read in Luke 2:34-35, "And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, 'Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed—and a

sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.' "

As a woman living in 2025, I am struck by the fact that Simeon spoke directly "to Mary His mother," in a time when women were not culturally front and center. But how could the mother of the Messiah *not* be at least 'stage right' on this occasion of presenting Jesus at the Temple?

I was also once a young mother, and loved reading that Mary—so very young to carry such an incredible burden, and blessing—"treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). I have to wonder how many times over her Son's years on Earth, and for all the years of her life, did the things she treasured up in her heart pierce—or console—her soul.

Mary's song of praise during her stay with Elizabeth and Zechariah, recorded in Luke 1:46-55, shows a maturity beyond her years. Her words in verse 54, "He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy," allude to the prophetic fulfillment of



**But Mary treasured
up all these things,
pondering them
in her heart.**

Luke 2:19

Psalms 98:3: “He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the Earth have seen the salvation of our God.” The world was being introduced to the Salvation of our God, Mary’s very own Son.

But let’s return for a moment to Simeon and how Scripture described him as “waiting for the Consolation of Israel.” The Hebrew root for “consolation”—נָחַם—“Naham,” as in the prophet Nehemiah, can also mean solace and redemption. In English, we think of consoling as comforting someone *after suffering*.

Relief for the Suffering

In the years leading up to Jesus’ birth, the people of Israel were suffering under Roman rule. Simeon was not the only one waiting for Israel’s Consolation that was to come through the long-expected Messiah. We see that longing within the ranks of Jesus’ own disciples.

Whether we’re talking about ancient or more recent history, the Jewish people have suffered and continue to suffer. Some of their suffering has most certainly been self-inflicted (or self-imposed?)

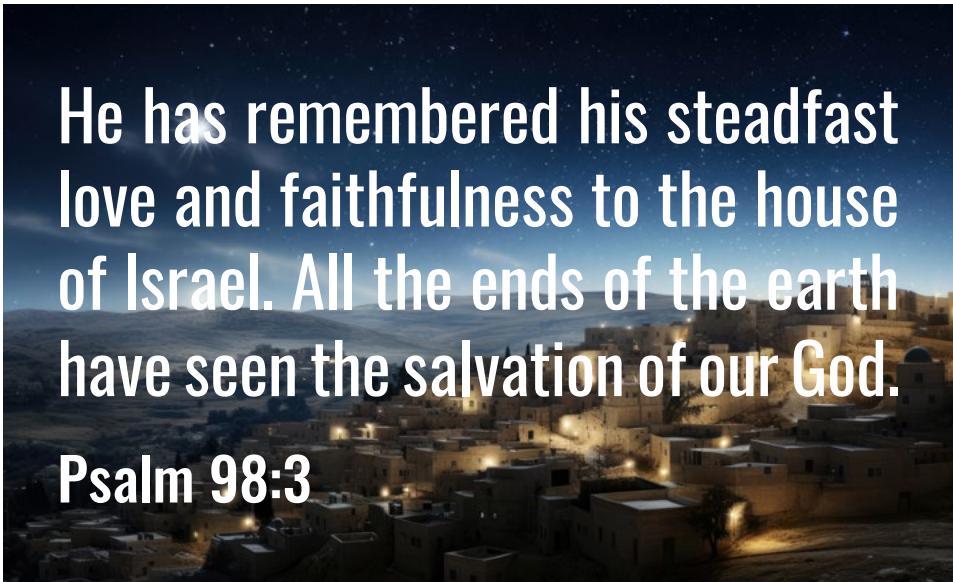
because of their disobedience and God’s remedial judgments. Many Jews are indeed looking for consolation, but as Johnny Lee sang, they’re looking for it “in all the wrong places.” Which is to say, anywhere and everywhere EXCEPT in the only begotten Son of God. Immanuel, God WITH us, God the Son, who took on human flesh to pay our debt (another idea that rankles Jews—substitutionary atonement—but that is a topic for another time).

All Israel was indeed on the lookout for God’s promised Consolation. They watched for the Messiah’s deliverance, which the people inferred would be deliverance from

their suffering under Roman rule, in the form of a military deliverer. Many were disappointed when Jesus did not fill that role according to their expectations.

All these years after the Messiah’s First Coming, there is not much true consolation to be found among secular Israelis today. It’s one of the reasons Dan and I find it depressing to be in the Land during Christmas. As I have written here previously, it isn’t very encouraging to be in the Land of the Savior’s birth only to see the day treated as a regular day. A day in which Dan and I have, in past years, gone to class and to work. Even Messianic believers downplay the celebration of the Savior’s birth. While I understand their frustration at our choosing to celebrate on December 25th—a date that most likely does not coincide with the actual date of Jesus’ birth—I think we should at least acknowledge His birth on *a* day, because without His birth, there would have been no death, burial, and resurrection.

As the years, the centuries, the millennia have passed, Jews have suffered. However, their suffering does not seem to motivate them



**He has remembered his steadfast
love and faithfulness to the house
of Israel. All the ends of the earth
have seen the salvation of our God.**

Psalms 98:3

to continue waiting for the Messiah. Instead, their years of suffering seem to have caused them to stop watching and waiting altogether. So I was surprised when, during a recent lesson with my Hebrew tutor, she made a statement I was not expecting.

The morning of my lesson, I learned the news that a dear American friend had passed away. I used my lesson as another opportunity to share with her the hope I have as a believer, even as I grieved the news I'd received. I explained that while I mourned for his wife and children in their loss, I rejoiced that our friend was with the Lord, whole and no longer suffering from the cancer that had ravaged his physical body.

My tutor is a very secular Israeli Jew, so it surprised me when she said that “all Israel is waiting for the Messiah.” I wasn't sure I had heard her correctly; remember, we were speaking Hebrew. When I asked her for clarification as to whether or not she, a self-described secular Jew, was waiting for the Messiah's coming, she said that she was not. She clarified that she had been speaking of *religious Jews* as those still waiting for the Messiah's appearance.

What are You Looking For?

Since October 7, 2023, many Israelis have been seeking answers and even demanding them. Many—especially those who lost loved ones and those whose family members were taken hostage—have demanded answers from their governmental and military leaders. In the two millennia since the Messiah's first appearing, very little has changed



on this front. Back to the words of Mary's song, God's mercy has helped His servant Israel survive the worst the world has thrown at them over the years, but most Jews failed then and still fail today to recognize God's mercy in sending His one and only Son. The vast majority refuse to see His “steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.”

As believers, we “have seen the salvation of our God,” the “light for revelation to the Gentiles,” and we have been given the great privilege and responsibility to share with the people of Israel their Messiah, the Hope of the nations, the “Consolation of Israel,” *for the glory of God's people Israel.*

Dan and I love living in Israel (every day except Christmas Day), and we know what an incredible blessing the Lord has given us in calling us here. We love the people of Israel, and our desire is for their consolation—remembering that one of the meanings of consolation is “redemption.” We strive to share

with our friends and neighbors here—the “weary world” around us—the thrill of hope that we celebrate during this Christmas season, the hope we so desire that they will know, the hope that came in the Savior's birth. The hope that keeps us looking for and praying for the soon return of Immanuel, God with us. ✨

**This article uses the ESV translation.*



Dan and Meg Price are the husband-and-wife team behind *Front Row Seat Ministries*. Serving the Lord in northern Israel, they are a treasured sister ministry to Lamb&Lion. Their warm and insightful 3-in-3 commentaries can be accessed at: **frontrowseatministries.org**



Brock and Bodie Thoene

EVERYTHING MEANS

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. (Luke 1:26-27, NIV)

Why Mary?

When confronted with life-changing words from an angelic messenger, Mary's response was not only immediate belief, but action. She traveled to see pregnant Elizabeth!

Mary, whose name means “bitter rebellion,” would carry the promised Son of God in her womb. But, unlike Eve, Mary was no rebel. She was favored by the Lord above all women. He had searched her heart, found no bitterness there, and declared her worthy. Her humble acceptance of her role in God's

eternal plan displayed a faith like Abraham's.

When the angel appeared to Mary, he brought her a word from God. Because of her belief, she received the Word into her spirit. Then, nine months later, that Eternal-Word-Made-Flesh dwelt among us. Such a miracle!

That miracle continues today. Receiving God's Word into your spirit and believing in the power of the Holy Spirit results in having God's Word present and alive in you.

Why Joseph?

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him

Immanuel,”—which means, “God with us” (Matthew 1:22-23).

Mary and Joseph were both descendants of David, but through different ancestors. Joseph's ancestor, King Jeconiah, was cursed for turning from the Lord, and thus the Messiah could not come from his lineage. Mary's line from David remained blessed. So each played a different role in redemption. Mary would bring forth the Redeemer. Joseph was among those in David's lineage who would be redeemed.

Joseph—so ordinary, but gifted with humility and faith—would play a pivotal role not only for his generation, but for all generations to come, throughout the world and for all Eternity! His life is proof that God uses ordinary people to accomplish His plans.



SOMETHING

Why Bethlehem?

He tends his flock like a shepherd; he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart. (Isaiah 40:11)

Ask anyone who celebrates Christmas where the Christ Child was born, and most will name Bethlehem. Carols memorialize its fame. Many could also explain why dusty, insignificant Bethlehem was chosen for such an important event. In Hebrew, Bethlehem means “House of Bread.” It was prophesied that the Messiah, “the Bread sent down from heaven to feed the souls of mankind,” would be a descendant of King David. He would also be born in the same city where David, the shepherd-king of Israel, was born—Bethlehem.

You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. (Micah 5:2, NIV)

John the Baptist called Jesus not only the “Son of God” (John 1:34) but also the “Lamb of God” (John 1:36).

The Firstborn Lamb of God would sacrifice His Life to atone for the sins of all—a one-time perfect sacrifice, offered by the Father God Himself.

Where else would “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29) have to be born if not Bethlehem, among the sacred Temple flocks? ✨



This article was taken from Brock and Bodie Thoene’s book *Why a Manger?* The Thoenes are a gifted husband-and-wife writing team known for their biblically-accurate historical fiction. Many portions of their book are taken from *The Nativity Trilogy* (*Fourth Dawn, Fifth Seal, and Sixth Covenant*) within *The A.D. Chronicles*—a 12-book series based on the life of Christ.

I have been personally blessed by the Thoene’s writing and have recommended their books to countless Christian readers over the years. The title of this article cites an oft-stated Thoene truism regarding the beauty and scope of God’s Word: “everything means something.”



RABBI YESHUA

TO THE JEW FIRST AND ALSO TO THE GENTILE

Ask any Christian the name of the Messiah, and they will almost always say, “Jesus.” That Name above all names is correct, but it is actually the Greek (Iesous), then the German (Jesus, where J is pronounced Y), and now the English version of our Savior’s given Name. Mary and Joseph were both told to name their Son Yeshua, which means “God is Salvation.”

We do not believe Jesus is offended when we pronounce His wonderful Name in our native tongue, any more than I would be offended to hear my name pronounced differently by a friend who speaks a different language. But it is essential to understand the Jewishness of Jesus, and to realize that when He ministered on the Earth, His disciples first referred to Him as “Rabbi.”

Dr. James Hugg, a long-serving Trustee of Lamb & Lion Ministries, has written *Rabbi Yeshua*, a book that emphasizes Jesus’ Jewish roots—along with the Jewish flavor of the rest of the Gospel narratives. In an age when many Jews are still suspicious of the (primarily) Gentile Church, given the persecution they have experienced at the hands of Christians, it is important

to convey to them that the original followers of “The Way” were Jews, and that Yeshua fulfilled the prophetic expectations of the Jewish prophets.

James Hugg learned of his own personal Jewish heritage as an adult, but all of us who follow Jesus/Yeshua would benefit by respecting the Jewish context of the Founder of Christianity.

James, what motivated you to undertake this project, and how long did it take you to pull together all the texts?

We were living in Israel for seven years, active in a Messianic Jewish congregation, when I asked the LORD first, to teach me to be a fisher of men, especially for the not-yet saved Jews. And second, to participate in the reconciliation of Gentiles to the Jewish Yeshua, supporting fulfillment of the Elijah reconciliation prophecy at the end of the book of Malachi. The answer to my prayer was an urge to write a book combining multiple teaching features: 1) use the Messianic Bible translation of the late Dr. David Stern; 2) harmonize the four Gospel eyewitness accounts; 3) put the ac-

counts in chronological order; 4) point to and quote fulfilled prophecies in the life of Yeshua; and 5) insert my editorial comments including several essays to explain Jewish Biblical traditions. I worked on this writing project, off and on, for almost 20 years.

You weave in some essays to expand on the straightforward narrative conveyed in the Gospels and other biblical texts. How did you choose which topics or controversies (like the timing of Yeshua's birth and death) to address?

You recall that the lead character in "Fiddler on the Roof" was Tevye, who explained how vital "Tradition" is in Jewish life. Well, it's the same in the Gentile church. Because we have lost connection with the Jewish roots of our Christian faith, we have substituted manmade traditions instead. Two of the best examples concern the birth and death of Yeshua (Christmas and Easter). One essay shows how we can calculate with reasonable certainty that Yeshua was born during the Feast of Sukkot (or Tabernacles) in September or October, 5 B.C., rather than on December 25th. Furthermore, Yeshua was likely born in a house rather than in a stable. Another essay solves the mystery of how Yeshua fulfilled His oft-repeated prophecy that he would spend three days and three nights in the tomb before His resurrection, rather than a traditional Good Friday crucifixion. Traditions can be good when we label them as such. But it is cru-

cial to distinguish Biblical accounts from man's traditions.

So many Gentile Christians today say that they love Jesus, but feel no particular love for the Jewish people. Or, if they do love Jews that they know personally, they are ambivalent or hostile toward the nation of Israel. What would you say to them?

The Bible is primarily a story about God's dealings with a particular people called the Hebrews, or the Israelites, or more commonly today, simply the Jews. God chose them to make an example of the Jews, blessing them when they obeyed and punishing them when they did not, but never wavering in His love and promises to them.

The most significant evidence that Yeshua is coming soon is the existence of the nation of Israel. God made many promises to Israel, and the fact that He is keeping those promises, despite the human failures of the Jews,

should strengthen our faith that He will keep every promise to the predominantly Gentile Church. Yeshua said that the way we treat the least of His Jewish brothers and sisters is how we are treating Him. When we bless Israel, called "the apple of God's eye," God reciprocates by blessing us.

What would you say to Jewish skeptics who consider Jesus to be the "Gentile Messiah," but certainly not the Anointed One anticipated by the Jewish prophets?

The Jewish prophets anticipated two Messiahs! The One for whom the Jews were and still are waiting is called "Messiah, Son of David," or the Conquering King. He's the Messiah the Palm Sunday crowds wanted to crown as their king – a warrior to defeat the Roman conquerors. But the Jewish sages identified a second "Messiah, Son of Joseph," or the Suffering Servant. Very few Jews were waiting for that Messiah, but



Ya'Akov (James) Hugg, PhD

that is precisely the role that Yeshua played. No one else could possibly be the Messiah – it is mathematically certain that Yeshua is the only candidate. He came at the appointed time, according to Daniel's and Balaam's prophecies. He had the perfect genealogy, recorded by Matthew and Luke. Yeshua lived a sinless life as He fulfilled over one hundred Messianic prophecies, offered Himself as the perfect Pass-over Lamb sacrifice, wore our crown of thorns, was crucified in our place, died and defeated death, rose from the grave, and ascended to Heaven to sit at God's right hand. Now, when Yeshua returns, the Jews will learn that One Perfect Jew, Rabbi Yeshua, fulfilled both Messiah prophecies.

You and your family made Aliyah—living in Israel itself for seven years. What did you learn as you dwelt among the Jewish people of Eretz Yisrael?

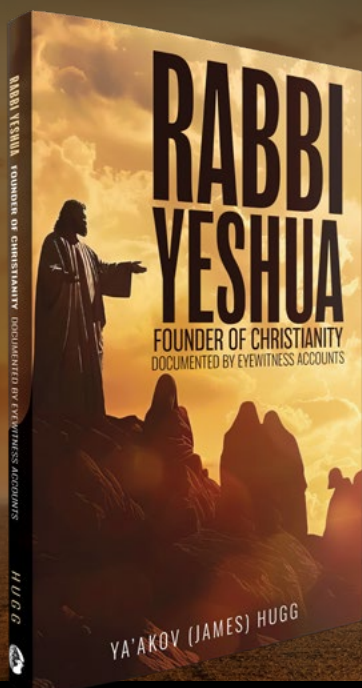
I was very pleasantly surprised to encounter many Jews who seemingly love the LORD God and are seeking Him fervently. They take very seriously the greatest command to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. God promised in Deuteronomy that if we seek Him with all our heart and soul, we will find Him. I believe that we are beginning to see a flood of Jews find Rabbi Yeshua as their Messiah.

As a long-serving Trustee with Lamb & Lion Ministries, how does our message proclaiming the soon return of the Messiah dovetail into both the Gospel and the Jewish origins of our faith?

I have been a Trustee since 1982 and have witnessed many signs of the times awaken as prophecies begin to be fulfilled. Never before have we seen such a convergence of all types of signs. I don't know when Yeshua will return to

rapture His bride or when the Tribulation will begin, but I know we are in the season, and I pray that any moment He will call us upward to meet Him in the clouds. In less than five more years, we will celebrate 2,000 years since His resurrection. His return is sooner than ever before. Will the Son of Man find faith on the earth when He returns (Luke 8:8)? True faith certainly incorporates the Jewishness of our savior Yeshua and understands the Jewish roots of our Christian faith.

Rabbi Yeshua will be a stimulating read and a valuable resource for anyone who wants and dares to understand that Jesus came as a Jew, first shared the Gospel with Jews, and is coming again to reign as King of the Jews. The eyewitness accounts it conveys offer a clear understanding of the Jewish roots of the Christian faith—making it a must-read and a life-altering gift for Jews and Gentiles alike. ✨



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THE RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER OF THE KING

Nathan Jones



As the Christmas season gently wraps around us, as if in a warm blanket fresh and fragrant from the dryer, no church service would feel complete without the reading of this wondrous Christmas-time passage:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. (Isaiah 9:6-7 KJV).

Many over the centuries have attributed Isaiah's prophecy concerning the birth of the Messiah to the Advent of Christ, instituting an ecclesiastical kingdom—the Church Age. But, in actuality, this passage

points much farther in time to the coming of an even greater kingdom—the Millennial Kingdom.

As we are currently living in this Church Age, we find ourselves suffering in a world filled with fear, violence, and strife. The unending peace promised by the prophet remains seasonal and fleeting. In contrast, Isaiah was revealing a King and Kingdom that would do away with all these vices. He prophesied what our hearts have so long desired—that the peace of Christmas would last all year long.

Conqueror of the Three Tyrants

If a kingdom bears the reflection of the one or ones who rule over it, then this coming Kingdom of Christ certainly emulates the divinity of its Messianic King. And the book of Isaiah especially does great justice in describing the righteous character of its Monarch.

In Isaiah's passage, the Son of God is identified as the ultimate head over all government during His kingdom reign. He will utter wonderful and consoling

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in the land of the shadow of death, the light will shine on them. You shall multiply the nation, You shall make great their gladness; they will be glad in Your presence as with the gladness of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

Isaiah 9:2-3

words to His subjects. As the Son rules righteously from the throne of David, His awesome power will ensure a peaceful regime.

To achieve such universal world peace presupposes a universal recognition of God and a willful subjection to His judgment. And, for those who choose to disobey His moral law, Christ will bring about swift judgment, but all in perfect justice, for He will rule with great zeal and attention over His realm.

In commenting on Isaiah 9, Martin Luther concluded that when righteousness defines such a kingdom, it will naturally conquer what he labeled the Three Tyrants: (1) sin, (2) death, and (3) the Devil. Luther elaborated: “The rule of sin is broken. The yoke of death is destroyed. The law which condemns has been subdued.”

Banner of the Harmonious Whole

We learn a whole lot more about the righteous character of the King and kingdom from reading Isaiah 11:

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a

Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

His delight is in the fear of the Lord, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.

And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious (verses 1-5, 10 NKJV).

In this passage, the righteous ruler is described puzzlingly as both “a Rod from the stem of Jesse” as well as “a Root of Jesse.” How can the King be at the same time both an ancestor and a descendant? To find

the answer, we look to the Messianic significance embedded within Isaiah’s description. The passage not only identifies an individual king of human descent born out of the line of David’s father, Jesse, but also, by virtue of its context, notes that the king would also be the forefather of Jesse. In presenting us with this supposed conundrum, Isaiah intended for us to understand that this righteous Ruler can only be the prophesied Messianic King, for while a Man, He also hails from divine and ancient origins.

In reading about the righteous character of the King in Isaiah 11, expositor Richard Brand beautifully likened Isaiah’s portrayal of the coming of the Holiness of God to “floating airily into one’s room on a springtime breeze to the sounds of the lovely stringed music of Vivaldi.” The “Branch” will possess three specific pairs of these beautiful gifts, which are identified as (1) wisdom and understanding, (2) the Spirit of counsel and might, and (3) the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. Brand explained that according to the first pair, the King will possess the practical acumen required to arbitrate political

and judicial affairs. According to the second pair, He will possess the qualities for advancing diplomatic negotiations and consolidating military authority. And, according to the third pair, He will validate the piety of the ideal king, thereby confirming His status as God's instrument.

Godly wisdom, divine counsel, and perfect righteousness—do those characterize the fallen leaders of our governments today? Most certainly not! No wonder commentators have described Isaiah's Messianic passage as "brimming with imagery that has shaped the imaginations of Jews and Christians for centuries." For, as Brand so aptly identified, "All of us will be living together in a harmonious whole. This will be the place where all creation lives in peace."

Defender of Truth and Justice

Other defining characteristics of the Messianic King's reign include perfect justice and absolute truth. Let's look again at the writings of Isaiah and Micah. These two prophets echoed each other's prophecy,



For Yahweh is our judge,
Yahweh is our lawgiver,
Yahweh is our king;
He will save us—
Isaiah 33:22

declaring that the King will serve as both lawgiver and judge. "Out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off" (Micah 4:1-3; see also Isaiah 2:2-4).

Both Micah and Isaiah shared a powerful vision of a future that will stand in stark contrast to humanity's distasteful experience with today's failed rulers. They leave the righteous yearning for the day when King Jesus will finally transform this chaotic world. Mount Zion will become the Supreme Court of the world. And the Messianic King will rule as suzerain (Commander

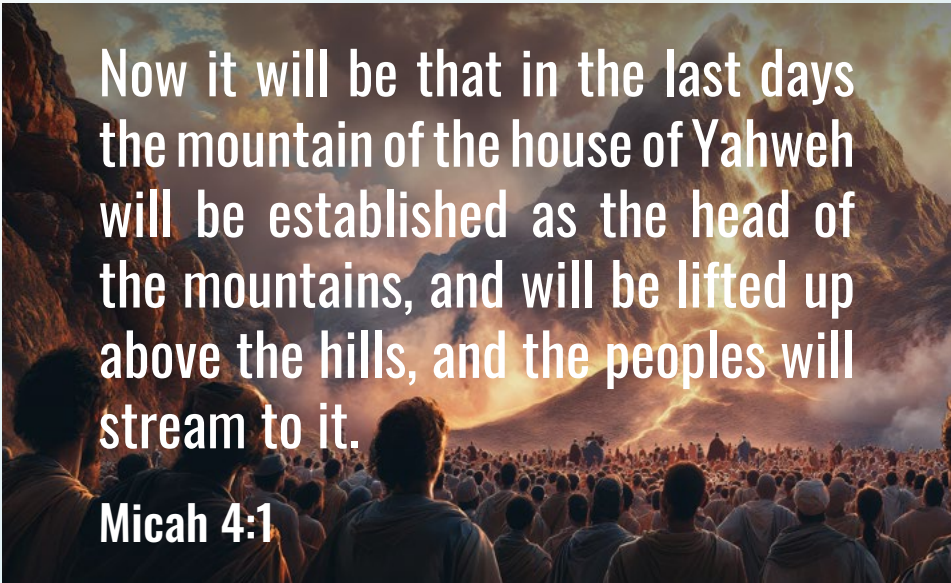
in Chief and Supreme Judge) over all nations, for He alone will hold all legitimate power to govern and judge (see also Psalms 2; 47; 82; 95; 96; 98; 99).

Isaiah compelled his readers to "look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet home... There the majestic Lord will be... (For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us)" (Isaiah 33:20-22).

A judge is usually perceived as one who brings condemnation to the guilty. Instead, during the Millennial Kingdom, Christ's presence will be welcomed as Savior.

Isaiah also proclaimed the Messianic King's tireless passion for justice: "He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law" (Isaiah 42:3-4).

Jesus recited this passage to the multitudes whom He was teaching in Matthew 12 (see verses 18-21). He did so to reveal Himself as this prophesied divine Lawgiver. We can take away three main reflections from Christ's teachings in Matthew 12: (1) His compassionate



Now it will be that in the last days
the mountain of the house of Yahweh
will be established as the head of
the mountains, and will be lifted up
above the hills, and the peoples will
stream to it.

Micah 4:1



Thus He will sprinkle many nations, kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; for what had not been told them they will see, and what they had not heard they will understand.

Isaiah 52:15

miracles, (2) His silence imposed on the cured, and (3) His withdrawal from the plotting Pharisees.

Jesus modeled justice tempered by gentleness and restraint, with a policy toward the weak and vulnerable, and He did so in an extraordinarily merciful, tender, and even-handed way. The life of Christ was meant to provide us with a template for what our lives will truly be like once we are living in truth and justice, as we will during the Millennial Kingdom.

Worthy Servant of the Exalted Courts

Isaiah also pointed out that those who will one day stand in the millennial court of the Lord will exhibit the same awestruck wonder as those who once stood before the exalted courts of King Solomon: “Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high... Kings shall shut their mouths at Him” (Isaiah 52:13, 15). As Wycliffe Bible translator Kenneth Litwak rightly noted, “The Servant’s exaltation is without precedent.”

Isaiah 52 doesn’t merely prophesy Judah’s remnant returning home one day from Babylonian captivity under Cyrus; instead, God was presenting something greater in mind: an ultimate deliverance from the Lord—one that He will bring about through the mysterious character known only as “My Servant.” The suffering of My Servant had made Him worthy of such great exaltation; a glory prescribed only to God.

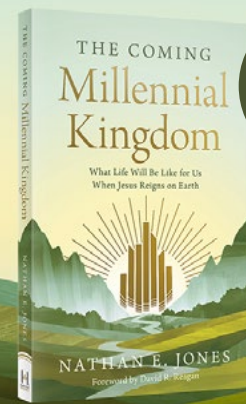
Remember that during Jesus Christ’s earthly ministry, He was looked upon as homely, weak, and an outlier. Aside from His ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, Jesus rarely received His due exaltation from the masses.

And yet, due to My Servant’s selfless actions in bringing salvation to humanity, the citizens of the Millennial Kingdom will equate Christ as being truly worthy of receiving the same glory as the God of the universe. Those who appear before the Servant’s courts will gape and marvel at this transformation. We, too, will wonder open-mouthed, amazed by Christ’s gracious and divine justice, and will exalt Him

with all the praise due such a righteous liege.

It is in the Millennial Kingdom that Isaiah’s Christmas prophecy will have at last been fulfilled. The trials and tribulations of this corrupted Church Age will have passed. Then and there, the world will finally know righteousness, justice, and peace, having received the rewards for our hope. And the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this! ✨

If you would like to learn more, *The Coming Millennial Kingdom* by Nathan Jones is available now at LambLion.com, or call 972-736-3567.



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HOPES AND FEARS ON THE HOME FRONT

Tim Moore



For Lamb & Lion Ministries' commentary on Charlie Kirk's assassination, **CLICK HERE**.

On September 10th, Christian Conservative advocate Charlie Kirk was assassinated while speaking at a college in Utah. His murder was quickly understood to be an assassination because he was a nationally recognized figure and his murderer was motivated by a deep hatred for his ideological views.

What could have become a lit fuse on a powder keg quickly turned into a contrast along political and ideological lines. No mass riots, or burned cities, or rampant violence ensued as Kirk's supporters responded in outrage. Instead, those who appreciated Charlie Kirk's bold assertion of Christian faith and Conservative policies held prayer vigils and peaceful tributes.



It was the Left that could not help itself from heaping scorn on the murdered man and even celebrating his murder. The vitriol was so pronounced that many celebrants lost their jobs for blatant insensitivity and callous inhumanity.

Followers of Christ who hold God's Word in high regard and discern the times we are living in should not be surprised. Speaking of the End Times, Daniel recorded these prophetic words: "Many will be purged, cleansed, and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand" (Daniel 12:10).

It should not surprise us that "the wicked act wickedly." What does surprise us is when the script is flipped and behavior is countercultural—like the old "Man bites dog" headline. The idea that millions of young people would be deeply wounded and righteously outraged—yet constrain themselves to peaceful assembly and advocacy—that should have the attention of the entire nation. And when a grieving young widow forgives her husband's assassin on national TV, the world takes notice and will be drawn to the Hope that is within her.



Erika Kirk

We've seen enough violence, mayhem, and murder to know that there is growing concern that our cities are pitching over into godlessness. The results are plain to see and cause for real and rising fear.

Turning Point on the Wide Road to Perdition

Yet this moment may prove to be a turning point, if not for the nation then at least for many who are waking up to the challenge of living out their own faith in Jesus Christ and letting His Light shine through them in an increasingly dark world. The widespread response of Christian young people that they want to live (and serve the Lord) like Charlie Kirk offers real hope.

Our culture, our nation, and our world seem to be on an unstoppable trajectory. Filled with hate and bent toward violence (the very meaning of the word "hamas" in Scripture), the wicked will continue to act wickedly. Satan is gleefully inspiring murderous rage in those whose hearts are not filled with the Holy Spirit. But God is not dead and His Holy Spirit is stirring in the hearts of those who are His.

Hamas - zealous rage and violence

As the moment of Jesus' return draws nearer by the day, hopes and fears will continue to rise. In the end, the realization of the hopes—and the elimination of the fears—will once again be met in Him.

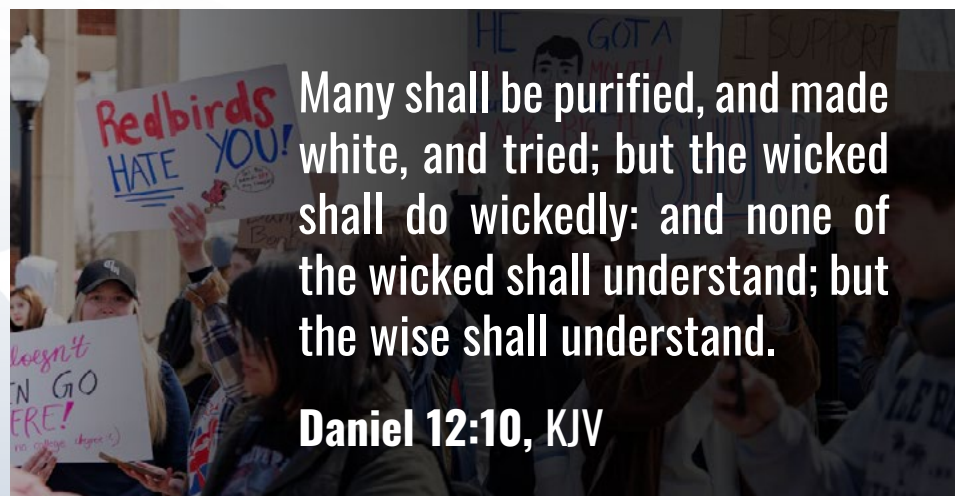
While we wait, let's encourage one another to set aside fear and act on the hope that is ours—the Blessed Hope that Jesus is coming soon. Make a point to encourage a young person to serve boldly in such a time as this, for their generation must carry the torch that can illuminate dark hearts until Christ comes.

But today, haters of America and our Judeo-Christian heritage are not just attacking us from overseas. They are multiplying within our midst—and the ideology of hate has infected scores of young people who are being steeped in a loathing of everything that once made America great—beginning with the Truth claim that our blessings, our freedoms, and our very lives are a gift from Almighty God.

In recent weeks, a leading Democratic Senator has actually denigrated the words of the Declaration of Independence affirming that our liberties are endowed to all of us by our Creator God.

Now, we have experienced yet another turning point—right on the eve of the anniversary of 9/11.

In September, a young man who had been indoctrinated by wicked ideologies lashed out with homicidal rage. His own family has described how he became filled with hate, rejecting the faith of his parents and embracing the mantras of the Left. Tragically, his violent rage (the very definition of the word, Hamas) manifested in his assassination of Charlie Kirk—a Conservative provocateur who was unashamed to profess his Christian faith.



Provocateur = a person who instigates conversation to advocate for a particular worldview and challenge others to engage in debate or dialogue.

Some will key on the word “provocateur,” but in this context the word simply means one who provokes dialogues or arguments regarding worldviews and truth claims. He did so by treating those who disagreed with him with dignity and grace—consistently inviting them to engage in a dialogue, modeling the Lord’s own invitation: “Come, let us reason together” (Isaiah 1:18).

Many on the Left (and some on the Right) do not want to reason—they do not want to debate or discuss or offer dignity. They simply label their foes as deplorables and seek to impose their worldview on everyone.

The reaction to the murder of Charlie Kirk has been telling. Young Christians who were inspired by his message gathered to mourn and console one another—seeking to overcome a collective shock to their generation. But they also came together to praise the Lord and commit themselves to being watchmen and watchwomen in our darkening world.

On the other side, those given over to the darkness have celebrated Charlie’s murder, gloating that his voice has been silenced—even as they fail to realize that a million Charlie Kirks will now follow in his footsteps.

The divide in America and around the world seems to be growing wider by the day. Satan is raging because he knows his time is short. He is our enemy. Those who re-

ject Christ are raging because their hearts are filled with confusion, hate, and despair. But that does not make them our enemy; as Charlie Kirk realized, that makes them our mission field.

The scenes playing out around the country right now prove that we are at a turning point. Will we turn back (or REPENT) from the destructive course we are on? Or will our society continue to flaunt its rebellion against the God who has blessed America?

**Repent - to turn
back or turn around**

Moses offered the Children of Israel an unequivocal, black-and-white choice, saying, “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants” (Deut. 30:19).

Less than a generation later, Joshua recognized his people’s tenden-

But if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua 24:15, NASB

cy to wander away from the God of blessing. He challenged them to CHOOSE whom they would serve—the false gods of the age or the true and living God. Joshua made the bold declaration that regardless of THEIR choice, he and his house would serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15).

Our nation is at an inflection point. I pray that in hindsight this will be seen as a turning point for the USA—and for individuals around the world who decide to follow Jesus.

You may not think you can impact a nation. Charlie Kirk’s life proves that one person, inspired by power of the Gospel and willing to speak Truth, engage with the lost, and shine the Light of Christ in the darkness CAN impact countless lives.

Choose this day whether YOU will rise to that challenge.

Godspeed. ✨



WOLVES

IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

WHY CHRISTIANS MUST WAKE UP TO THE THREAT OF RADICAL ISLAM

By Michael Youssef

As a Coptic Christian born in Egypt and as a person who spent years in academia—including earning a Ph.D. from Emory University in Atlanta studying radical Islamic movements—I speak with authority when I warn against the menace of Islamism, which is overwhelmingly invading the West.

For decades, I've warned that this ideology is not just incompatible with Western civilization; it rejects coexistence entirely, seeking takeover. Now, Islamists have formed an unholy alliance with Marxists—two groups who would normally be at each other's throats, yet now are uniting throughout Europe and North America for the purpose of wreaking havoc on the West. Their ultimate purpose is to build a seventh-century Arabian desert Utopia out of the wreckage of Western civilization.

“There’s a growing unholy alliance between Islamists and socialists.”

Antisemitism as a Harbinger

Crimes against Jewish Americans continue to make headlines, from the killing of the young couple in Washington, D.C., to the blatant antisemitic attack by an illegal Egyptian migrant in Boulder, Colorado. The Jews, however, are the canaries in the coal mine. The larger target, where the sights of radical Islamists are locked, is Western civilization.

These incidents are not isolated; they're harbingers of chaos fueled by open borders and judicial obstruction. Christians and moral people everywhere must wake up, discern the truth, and reclaim our culture before it's lost. We must share Christ's Gospel boldly. Make no mistake about it: Even if Westerners themselves aren't aware of it, Western civilization is the byproduct of the Christian reformation of the 14th century.



Radical Islam's goal is clear: not compatibility, but a global caliphate. In *The Third Jihad*, I explain how a holy war is underway, not only with terror but by stealth, with some even aiming to impose an Islamic State of North America by 2050. This "third jihad," unlike the sword-driven first jihad (622–751) or second jihad (1302–1922), uses our freedoms—migration, legal systems, cultural sway—to infiltrate and dominate. The Quran's call to "hijrah" (jihad by migration) urges Muslims to spread Islam, viewing relocation as sacred. In Europe, chants of "Allah give victory to Islam everywhere" accompany unassimilated enclaves. France's nine million Muslims, with birthrates outpacing natives ten to one, are building mosques and shifting culture, often rejecting Western values. Britain's Sharia councils erode sovereignty, operating as parallel legal systems. This isn't integration; it's conquest.

Islam's Agenda

Violence isn't the only threat. We now face cultural erosion. Radical Islamists exploit our systems. In *The Hidden Enemy*, I noted, "The enemy without [radical Islam] seeks a caliphate; the enemy within [secular leftists] erases Judeo-Christian values." Their alli-

ance is stark: leftists, rejecting biblical truth, defend Sharia advocates like Linda Sarsour, who co-led the 2017 Women's March alongside abortion and LGBTQ champions. Political correctness brands critics "Islamophobic," shielding this pact. Secularism's spiritual vacuum—evident since Jesse Jackson's 1987 chant, "Western Civ has got to go!"—invites Islamists to fill the void, using welfare, courts, and media to advance their agenda. As Christianity fades, with Europe's churches now museums, radical Islam sees our culture as "overripe fruit," ripe for conquest.

Recent events underscore the stakes. January 2025's ISIS-inspired New Orleans attack, killing 14, exposed our vulnerability. In Cyprus, recent protests accused Turkey of imposing political Islam, eroding secular roots—a warning for the West. X (formerly Twitter) posts amplify these concerns, decrying Sharia's quiet spread. Pacifying radicals, as we did before the Taliban's 2021 victory, breeds extremism. Historically, Christians stopped Islamic conquests at Tours (732) and Vienna (1683). Today's fight is spiritual



and cultural, yet many Christians stay silent, cowed by “tolerance.” As I have stated before, this deception is “from the pit of hell.” Excusing non-assimilation or Sharia zones surrenders our heritage.

The open border crisis amplifies this. Over four years, lax policies and judicial blocks have imported chaos. The Boulder attacker, an illegal migrant, embodies the risk: unchecked entry brings ideologies that fuel antisemitism and violence. If we don’t enforce borders, we’ll see more D.C. and Boulder tragedies. Radical Islam isn’t here to blend in—it’s here to dominate, as my decades studying its trap-pings confirm.

Christianity’s Counteroffensive

So, what must Christians do? First, go to God’s Word, not headlines. Second, evangelize boldly. Understand the darkness of radical Islam, but love Muslim people. The Gospel is our power, so we must find the courage to share Christ with Muslim neighbors. Third, fortify

churches. Pastors must preach unapologetically, equipping believers to counter secularism and Islamism. Congregations should disciple families, mentor youth, and pray for God to move.

The stakes are eternal. In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus warned of wolves in sheep’s clothing. Radical Islam cloaks its takeover in tolerance, but its aim is a caliphate, not coexistence. Antisemitism will surge as unvetted migration grows. Yet hope endures. The early church faced Rome and won souls through love. We can, too. Christians, rise up. Share the Gospel, love Muslims, defend our faith, and demand secure borders.

Radical Islam banks on our silence—let’s prove them wrong. ✨



This article first appeared on DailyWire.com (June 4, 2025). It is still timely and urgent and is reprinted with the permission of the author.

Dr. Michael Youssef was born in Egypt and serves as the senior pastor of Church of the Apostles in Atlanta. He is the author of over 50 books and the founder of *Leading the Way*, a radio broadcast that reaches 190 countries.

He recently appeared on *Christ in Prophecy* to discuss the rising threat of barbarians among us. His book, *The Barbarians are Here*, is available at ChristInProphecy.com.



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THE HOPES AND FEARS

Tim Moore

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

That phrase was first introduced to the literary world by French novelist Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, but it captures the vanity expressed by the author of Ecclesiastes. The Preacher who penned that book of wisdom came to realize that there is nothing new under the sun.

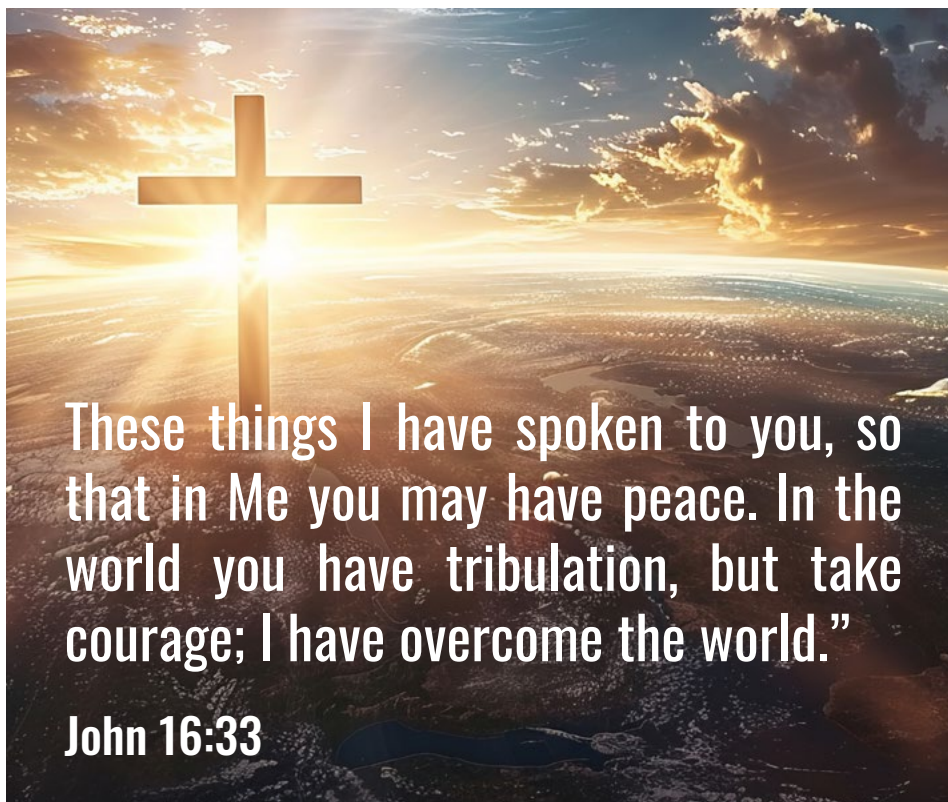
Applied to Bible prophecy, it might be more appropriate to say that many things seem to be coming to a head, or converging. The age-old battle between darkness and light has raged since the Garden, but now the clash of spiritual forces seems particularly pitched. It is as if God is turning up the heat (allowing prophetic signs to multiply exponentially) and Satan is recognizing His time is short.

Convergence - the idea that prophetic signs are multiplying and intertwining at an exponential rate, indicating the rapid approach of the End Times.

As the End draws near, we would naturally expect that darkness would rage in frenzied anticipation of the Light that will soon burst from the heavens, the Light whose first inklings will herald the soon demise of night's terrors. And that is precisely what is happening.

Holy Terror or Blessed Hope

For those who discern the lengthening shadows and recognize that wickedness is rising but do not understand the implications of these prophetic fulfillments, mounting discouragement threatens to dampen their joy. Many people see increasing wars and rumors of wars, societal breakdown, rising apostasy in the Church, and all the other foretold signs merely as evidence that the world is “going to hell in a handbasket.” What too many fail to realize is that Jesus told us that these things would happen. He said, “In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).



If you are a veteran Christian—meaning a steadfast follower of Jesus who has seen much over the course of a long life of faithfulness—this is no time to go wobbly! That is what Lady Margaret Thatcher used to tell her colleagues in parliament when many of them grew weak-kneed in the face of peril. She knew that victory could be gained if they stood firm and fought for what was right in principle and in the best interest of their nation.



We have the assurance that the victory is already won, although Christ has not yet bound Satan or instituted His reign on the Earth. The Millennial Kingdom is coming soon. We just have to hold out—and “fight the good fight”—a little while longer (1 Timothy 6:12). Paul’s charge to Timothy was to carry on, following the order (commandment) given “until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Timothy 6:13-15).

Our present situation is far from precarious. To paraphrase Marine General Chesty Puller (when he was told that his battalion was surrounded by Chinese forces in Korea), “We’re surrounded. Good! They can’t get away from us now!”

Folks, we are surrounded, not by the enemy but by people who are ignorant of their eternal fate. They may even be unwitting enemies of the Cross, but Scripture says that Christ died for them—just as He died for me and for you. Do we love

the lost with Christ-like love? Are we willing to risk life, limb, embarrassment, humiliation, or even mere discomfort to share the Gospel with those who are perishing?

Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide; Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning, new mercies I see; All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

— Thomas O. Chisholm (1923)

If the Lord tarries and some of us are called to our heavenly home while the war rages on Earth, have we trained up young Christian soldiers to take up our mantle and continue the advance? There is a reason Scripture says that the gates of Hell will not prevail against the Church of Jesus Christ—we are to be pressing forward until our Commander relieves us of duty.

There is no doubt that fear is rising in the world. It is palpable in many circles, even within the ranks of those who are well-versed in Bible prophecy. But as any good military commander can tell you, fear is debilitating and contagious. That is why we are told to encourage one another—and all the more as we see the Day drawing near.

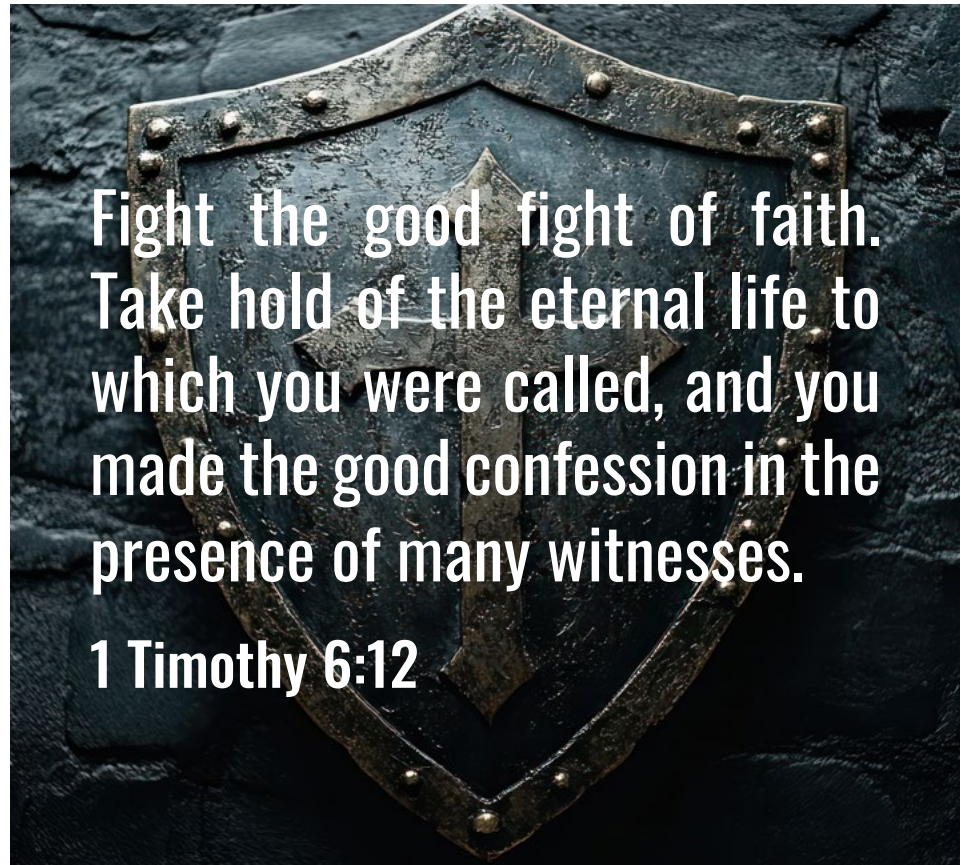
Hope is also contagious. A single person overflowing with resilient,

eternal hope (not merely hope in hope or a futile cause, but in a righteous cause and trustworthy promise) can invigorate others to rise up and press forward.

The motto of the Israeli Defense Force is “Acharai” (אחרי), which means “Follow me!” It captures the emphasis on leaders boldly leading to gain victory. That unflinching confidence is what has set the IDF apart from its Arab foes in wars over the past 80 years.

When Jesus called His disciples, He said, “Follow Me.” If you are a follower of Christ, He has also called you to follow. Even as the spiritual battle rages around us, we can be confident because He has promised never to leave us or forsake us.

At the Rapture, every follower of Jesus will rise to meet our Blessed Hope. During the Tribulation, those in rebellion will come to realize that He is their Holy Terror. The choice is age-old. Moses presented the Children of Israel with the same choice: life and death, blessing and curse. He urged them to choose life so that they and their descendants might live (Deuteronomy 30:19).



As the world spirals out of control, I urge you to choose between hope and fear—a decision that will determine your effectiveness in the army of God. If you choose hope, exude confidence in the knowledge that the Holy Child of Bethlehem will descend to us, coming to collect us and abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

Then lift up your countenance, discipline your words, and train up those who are following after you. And stay in the fight, until you “take hold of the eternal life to which you were called” (1 Timothy 6:12). ✦

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Fight, Fight, Fight!

Tim Moore

Military historians will tell you that there are two scenarios that can prove disastrous for an army engaged in combat. The first is to think that the battle is lost, which means that further resistance is futile. The other is to believe the battle is won while the fight is still ongoing, leading to complacency and a sudden reversal in the battle's outcome.

How does this approach apply to us as Christian soldiers who are serving in the Lord's army? Regardless of appearances, as we engage in spiritual battles daily, we know that our Commander has already won the war. However, since He hasn't yet imposed His peace on the world, we must stay alert and fight the good fight until He comes or calls us home.

See To It that No One Misleads You

Over time, Christians risk falling into the trap of straying off the narrow path into one of those deceptions. With the rise of darkness in the world (something Scripture prophesied), Satan has convinced many that there is simply no point in resisting. Sure, Jesus will win the war, but the odds seem insurmountable when surveying the scene and grappling with what action to take. So, some Christians decide to essentially sit back and wait for Jesus to rescue us.

On the other extreme, some followers of Christ embrace the inevitability of His victory and also choose to lie back. Frankly, some Evangelical Christians seem to have relaxed their fervor since early 2025—perhaps



relieved that things seem to be “going our way” for the first time in several years.

One other insidious deception Christians may ascribe to (even unconsciously) is the idea that allowing darkness to multiply simply accelerates the End—forgetting that countless souls will succumb to the darkness if the bearers of Light hide themselves under a bushel.

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” (Often attributed to Edmund Burke)

A Better Way

Lamb & Lion Ministries is grateful to be supported by thousands of Prophecy Partners and supporters who understand that we must stay engaged while the battle rages. Yes, Jesus will prevail, but He calls us to serve faithfully—shining His Light and co-laboring with Him.

If the *Lamplighter* magazine has been a blessing to you, please know that we endeavor to share it with anyone who would like to seek the light of God’s prophetic Word. Our *Christ in Prophecy* TV and radio programs are designed to share the Gospel-centered message that Jesus is coming soon—encouraging

the Church and warning the lost. None of our outreach is possible without the sustaining wherewithal of people like you.

If you would be willing to *pay it forward* to other image-bearers of God and future generations of faithful fruit-bearers, please join our network of Prophecy Partners who support Lamb & Lion Ministries regularly. You can do so through a host of giving options. If your company offers matching funds on “Giving Tuesday” (December 2, 2025), you might even be able to double or triple your contribution.

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supporters who are now with the Lord but instructed that a portion of their estate be invested in paying it forward even after they have gone home. Just contact Reva Frye, our Chief Financial Officer, if you want to explore some of the unusual ways to support this ministry and even gain considerable tax advantages. (For instance, Congress recently approved a new “above the line” charitable deduction of \$1,000 for non-itemizing taxpayers or \$2,000 for married couples, beginning in 2026!)

If you are already a Prophecy Partner, thank you for your faithful support. If you are not yet a Prophecy Partner but would like to stick a finger in Satan’s eye, help us proclaim Jesus’ soon return.

Join the Battle

Do not be misled. We are in the midst of a battle. Satan would like to dull our anticipation of victory or convince us that he is prevailing, but we know better. Likewise, this is no time to coast to the goal. The End is near, but that means we should dig deep and sprint to the Finish Line.

Join us in this fight. Soon our Commander will come. Let’s hope to hear Him say, “Well done, My good and faithful servant.” ✨

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

NATURE

An unusually wet spring was followed by a long, dry summer for much of the United States. Combined with biological threats like the screw worm threatening to decimate beef production throughout North America, farmers continue to be plagued by natural forces that are pummeling the food supply.



The final “Blood Moon” of 2025 (visible in portions of Africa, India, China, and Australia on September 7-8) came and went without any unusual prophetic significance (again)—to the great chagrin of date-setters who were sure this would be the year of Christ’s return.



SOCIETY

Fed up with galling levels of violent crime in the nation’s capitol, President Trump federalized the local police and supplemented them with federal law enforcement officers and even the National Guard—to the great dismay of the Left, who see urban crime as more tolerable than Trumpian solutions.



A 22-year-old young man who was radicalized at college and embroiled in a transgender relationship assassinated Charlie Kirk in Utah; the outpouring of grief by Conservatives and mocking disdain by the Left speaks to the deep and dangerous divide in America.



SPIRITUAL

Despite some positive spiritual signs in America, a large percentage of our population loudly clamors for unrestricted (and even government-paid) abortion, secular paganism, and vehement opposition to traditional Judeo-Christian values. The American house seems irreparably divided at best.



As most Christian denominations continue to decline, the United States is witnessing dramatic increases in “none” as well as Muslims, Hindus, and even Wiccans; while some growth can be attributed to unchecked immigration, many native Americans are abandoning the faith of their fathers.



The years keep on slipping away. And yet, the indications of impending doom (for those who have rejected the love and mercy of Christ) and dramatic rescue (for those who worship Him as Savior and Lord) are reaching a fever pitch all around us. Jews are beginning to realize that their hope does not lie in this world. Muslims are coming to Christ through visions and dreams. And members of the remnant Church are listening for a shout from Heaven. The Signs are evident for all who have eyes to see.

WORLD POLITICS

Expressing resentment toward American tariffs designed to level the economic playing field, BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) have become cozier than ever, even expanding to include countries like Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates—posing a growing threat to the West.



After sparking hope that the war in Ukraine would finally end, Russia's President Vladimir Putin renewed his indiscriminate attacks on Ukrainian civilians; the usual suspects who align with Russia (and some surprising supposed American allies like Turkey) could see or hear no evil.



TECHNOLOGY

China's rising technological prowess (utilizing research and designs stolen from the West), coupled with its large active military and Communist Party agenda, is causing consternation throughout the Free World; Chinese advances now rival or outpace known US capabilities.



An Artificial Intelligence video purporting to present Elon Musk had many Christians celebrating over his supposed profession of faith in Christ; the fact that the video was fake proved the danger of believing everything our eyes and ears perceive.



ISRAEL

Rising antisemitism throughout the West and even the US testifies to a dangerous but prophetically foretold situation for Israel and the Jewish Diaspora: the World will become hostile and come against the Jewish state; even prominent Western Jews are caught up in the anti-Zionism fervor.



Even as western powers placate their own Muslim population by calling for a Palestinian state (albeit ill-defined and infamously fractured) and the UN General Assembly continually snubs Benjamin Netanyahu, prayers were answered when the living Israeli hostages came home in October.



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