Rewards

Heavenly Rewards:
The Types
Their Basis
Their Permanence
The Difference They Should Make in Your Life
Tough Decisions

All of us are faced with tough decisions from time to time. I was recently faced with one of the most difficult decisions of my life — namely, whether or not to place my dear wife, Ann, in a memory care facility.

Until age 61 Ann had always been blessed with exceptionally good health. For example, she had never had an operation of any kind, not even a tonsillectomy or an appendectomy. And this is still true to this day. But in 2002 she suffered a severe and sudden attack of Fibromyalgia. She was teaching first grade at the time and had accumulated 185 days of sick leave (because she was never ill!).

She was forced to retire immediately after 30 years of teaching because teaching first grade is very stressful, and stress intensifies the effects of Fibromyalgia. In 2009 she developed Acute Fatigue Syndrome. And in 2011 she began to exhibit manifestations of dementia. She was ultimately diagnosed with Benson’s Syndrome, an extremely rare neurological condition that causes both dementia and blindness.

Through it all, Ann kept a very positive attitude. When I would comment about how much I regretted her suffering, she would always reply, “There are people who are suffering much worse than me.”

For the past three and a half years Ann has had to have caregivers. The Lord supplied her with two wonderful daytime caregivers, one for weekdays, and the other for the weekends. I served in that capacity during the evenings, nights and other possible care.

Recently, the caregivers came to me and said the time had come for Ann to be placed in a care facility. My daughters agreed. I knew they were right, but it broke my heart to even consider it. I put it off as long as I could, and then the day finally came.

After moving her to the facility, I went back home with a very heavy heart, and I quickly discovered that without Ann, it was no longer a home. It was just an empty, lonely house.

I go to the facility each afternoon and feed Ann her supper. I then take her to her room and read to her from the Scriptures, a devotional book, and a book of short stories about dogs. We then pray together. She seems to have adjusted well — much better than I have.

The suffering of the righteous has always been the greatest challenge to my faith. And now it has come home to me personally. I’m handling it by daily praising God for all His blessings. I’m thanking Him for 57 years of marriage and for the fact that Ann is not suffering from physical pain. I am also thankful for the inheritances from her parents and mine which are making it possible for me to supply her with the finest possible care.

I’ve been re-studying the book of Job, and it has reminded me that some suffering is due to sin, some is designed to refine us in righteousness, and some — as in Ann’s case — is to fulfill the perfect purposes of God.

Meanwhile, I keep reminding myself that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18). My daughters recently put a large paraphrase of this verse on the wall of Ann’s bedroom. It reads: “The pain that you’ve been feeling can’t compare to the joy that’s coming!”

My heart cries, “Maranatha!”

Observations by the Editor

January - February 2018
Heavenly Rewards: The Types / Their Basis / Their Permanence And the Difference They Should Make in Your Life

Glenn Meredith

I’ve got to be honest with you about the fact that from the early part of my life, I wasn’t real excited about the return of Jesus. I could remember sitting in a revival meeting one time when I was a teenager, and the evangelist actually said that when Jesus returns, we are going to stand before His judgment seat and watch as our lives are flashed on a giant movie screen and all the sins that we have ever committed will be shown on that screen for all to see. To say the least, I really wasn’t looking forward to that!

I have found since that time that many believers share the same feeling of fear and anxiety that I felt as a teenager. And if that is how you feel, then I have got great news for you! The great movie show of your life is not what the Bible teaches.

The Misunderstood Passage

Let’s get into this issue by taking a look at 2 Corinthians 5:10 where the Apostle Paul says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body whether good or bad.” Now, all my life when I would read that passage, I would think, “Okay, I’m going to stand before Jesus at His judgment seat, and He is going to talk to me about all the good things that I’ve done, but also all the bad or sinful things that I’ve done. And all those sinful things will be paraded before the world.”

Now, the great good news I have for you is that this passage is teaching no such thing. There are several words in New Testament Greek that can be translated as “bad.” A couple of them mean morally bad, referring to something that is sinful or wicked. But the word that is used here (kakos) is a different word, and its primary meaning in this context is worthless. It would be like if a person said, “The piece of fruit that I bought is bad.” The word, bad, in that sentence doesn’t mean the fruit is morally sinful or evil. It just means it is worthless.

That’s what Paul is teaching in 2 Corinthians 5:10. When we as believers stand before the judgment seat of Jesus, we are not going to be judged of our sins. Instead, we are going to be judged of the works that we have done for Jesus. And what will be evaluated are those works that we have done that are of value to the Lord. The Bible says that we will receive rewards for those things that we have done that are of value. And those things we have done that are worthless, that are of no genuine eternal value, will be burned up.

The Good News about Judgment

Now why is it that when we are standing before the judgment seat of Christ that somehow we don’t have to give an account of our sins? Why is that? Is God just going to overlook them? Are we just getting a pass? No, the Scriptures say that we who are believers will never stand before Jesus and give an accounting of our sins. And that’s because of another judgment that has already taken place. I’m talking about when the Lord Jesus Christ, our glorious Savior, was hanging on the Cross. The Bible says Jesus’ death for our sins cancelled the charge of the legal indebtedness which stood against us and condemned us. Jesus has taken it away, nailing it to the Cross.

The cross was like the electric chair of the Roman Empire. It was the means of public execution. And so when a criminal was crucified, they would nail to his cross the charges for which he was dying so that all who would walk by and see him would know the crimes for which he was being executed.

When our Lord Jesus was crucified, Pilate had a sign placed on His cross that read, “This is the King of the Jews.” But the Bible says that’s not really the crime for which He died. His death, according to Colossians 2:14, was for your sins and mine which God nailed to the Cross. Thus, while Jesus was hanging on the Cross, God began to treat Jesus like He would have treated you and me in judgment for our sins. That is why Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” Why? Because at that moment He was answering for your sins and mine.

And so, my sins and yours were judged upon the Cross. And because of the blood that Jesus Christ shed for our sins, because of the death that He died in our place, the Bible says that the record book of our sins was taken away, removed and canceled. There is no more record of your sin if you’re a child of Jesus Christ. Isn’t that great news? And, in fact, if you stood before God and He required your sins to be judged again, He would be
unjust.

And because of that, when the Lord Jesus comes for His Bride, the Church, the first thing He’s going to do is reward His Bride. He’s not going to beat up His Bride with judgment. The Bible tells us there is a promise of rewards.

A Misunderstood Concept

Now, I find that believers don’t really talk about rewards very much. I’m really amazed quite frankly at the reaction I get when I bring up the subject. I cannot tell you how many times I have seen someone do something that is sweet or thoughtful or kind, and I will say something like, “Well, the Lord is going to reward you for that.” And the person will say, “Oh, no, no, no, I’m not doing it for the reward. I don’t want any reward.”

It is like they turn a double back flip to get away from the idea of rewards. Well, why is that? I think it is a misunderstanding of something that they think the Bible teaches, that it doesn’t teach. Many believers think that even if the Lord promises us over and over again in His Word that we are going to be rewarded for the good things we’ve done, they think that if they are motivated by the reward, they will lose the reward! They think God promised rewards so we would be motivated to serve Him, but if by chance we are motivated by those rewards we will lose them. Now, where do they get that strange idea?

I think it is from Matthew 6:1-4 where Jesus made the following comment:

1) “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2) “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

3) “But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

4) so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Because of this passage, many people think that if somehow they work for a reward, they will lose the reward. But that’s not what Jesus was teaching. The point He was making is that our good works should not be done for the praise of men. Rather, we should do our good for the praise of Jesus.

We are supposed to be motivated by the hope that when we stand before the Lord one day, we will hear our wonderful Savior say, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21). That would have to be the most beautiful thing that you could ever hear in your entire eternity — for Jesus Christ to look at your life and sum it up by saying, “Good job. Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord prepared for you before the foundations of the world.” What a great day that would be.

The Temporary View

Another reason some believers are not really motivated very much by the promise of rewards is because they believe the rewards will be temporary. That’s where I was for many years. I was taught that when I died, or when the Lord came, I would stand before Him and be judged of my works to determine my rewards. And when it was all over and I had received my rewards, I would cast them at the feet of Jesus and be done with them. Everyone else would do likewise, and from that point on, we would all be the same for all eternity.

This concept is based on a passage in the book of Revelation where the Apostle John is taken to Heaven — to the throne room of God — where he sees 24 elders worshiping God. They cast their crowns before the throne, and they say, “You are worthy, our Lord and our God, to receive glory, and honor, and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being” (Revelation 4:11).

But I want you to notice that this passage starts with a qualifier. It begins with the word, “whenever.” It says that “whenever” the 24 elders worship God, they cast their crowns before His throne. That does not indicate a once and for all action. Instead, it indicates that they put their crowns at God’s feet each time they worship Him. Do you really think there is only one time when we are going to break forth in worship of God? No, this is going to be happening eternally.

Likewise, do you think it won’t matter if you have no rewards with which to honor the Lord? Won’t it be wonderful to be able to say to Him, “I thought You were worthy of living my life for You when I was on earth. Here now are the rewards You’ve given me for that which I believed was just my reasonable service. You gave me the rewards, and now I place them at Your feet because You are the one who deserves the honor, and the glory, and the praise, not me.” And you will be able to do that over and over and over again throughout eternity.

So, some people don’t think about rewards because they think they’re not supposed to, and that is wrong. Others think they are temporary, and that is wrong. In 1 Peter 5:4 we are told that “when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

The Minimum Effort View

I’ve also heard some people say, “Well, you know I don’t really care about rewards. They don’t really matter. I just want to make it to Heaven. And if I just get through the pearly gates and they slam the gates behind me I’ll say, ‘Whew, I made it!’” And they think they’ll be totally cool with that. They think that...
Heaven is going to be so wonderful that it really won’t matter to them for all eternity whether they have any rewards, because they have concluded, “We’re all going to sort of be the same up there anyway. There’s not going to be any distinctions between believers, so it doesn’t really matter.” But 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 says:

   11) For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.
   12) If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,
   13) their work will be shown for what it is, because the day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work.
   14) If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward.
   15) If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved — even though only as one escaping through the flames.

This is saying that at the moment you stand before the judgment seat of Jesus — when your life for Him is evaluated— your life’s work could go up in flames. Do you really think it won’t matter to you? Do you think when your name is called and you are face-to-face with Jesus, you are not going to mind saying, “Well, Lord, I just wanted your salvation, and I am glad to have it. But I didn’t think you were worth living for. I didn’t think it was worth sacrificing for You.” Do you see what I mean when I say it’s going to be a terrible thing for any believer to stand before Jesus with a wasted life?

The Socialist View

Another reason some people are not motivated by rewards is because they have what I would call a Socialist view of Heaven. This is the concept that the rewards will be temporary, and once they are discarded, we’re all just going to be the same, and there will be no distinctions in Heaven for all eternity.

They base this reasoning on the belief that if the rewards are permanent, they would motivate us to be jealous of each other, and there certainly cannot be any jealousy in Heaven. They think, “Well if I saw somebody who had more rewards than me, I’d be jealous.” Now, that’s flawed human logic, because it’s not what the Bible teaches.

It is certainly correct that there will be no jealousy in Heaven. But it’s not because there will be no distinctions between rewards. It’s because we will all be motivated by perfect love at that point. It will be like one of my children doing something special and becoming very successful in life. I would be exceedingly happy for them, not jealous of them, because I love them.

Likewise, in Heaven, we will love our brothers and sisters, and when we see someone who did devote their life to Christ, we will admire them. We will praise them. We will thank them for their service, and we will love them. We will not be jealous.

Believe me, there will be eternal distinctions in Heaven because what you do now in this life will have a profound impact on the rewards you will receive and the services you will be assigned.

“Believe me, there will be eternal distinctions in Heaven because what you do now in this life will have a profound impact on the rewards you will receive and the services you will be assigned.”

One is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 where it says: “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? So, run to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”

This reward is often referred to as “The Incorruptible Crown” or “The Victor’s Crown.” This is a crown that evidently will be earned by those who demonstrate self-discipline in their service to the Lord. In other words, the person who receives this reward will be one who lived their life saying, “Not my will Lord, but Your will be done. I want to live my life for You.”

2 A second crown is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 2:19. It’s called “The Crown of Rejoicing,” or “The Soul Winner’s Crown.” In that verse, Paul says, “What is our hope? What is our joy? What is the crown in which we will glory in the presence of the Lord when He comes? Is it not you?” He is speaking of the people he has brought to the Lord.

This verse makes it clear that there is evidently going to be a reward that will be given out to those who have been instrumental in leading other people to come to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that this crown will be given to those who have personally led others to Christ. But it may be given also to those who have been an evangelistic aide — those who have prayed for souls and who have given financially to evangelistic ministries.

3 There is a third crown mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:8. It is called “The Crown of Righteousness.” The Apostle Paul wrote about this crown near the end of his life, shortly before he knew he was going to die a martyr’s death. He said: “I fought the good fight, I finished the race, I’ve kept the faith, and now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will award to me on that day; but not to me only, but to all those who have longed for His appearing.”

Think of it, there is a special crown that will be given to those people who live with an eternal attitude, daily yearning for the return of Jesus.

4 A fourth crown is one I’ve mentioned already. It’s found in 1 Peter 5:4. It is called “The Shepherd’s Crown” or “The Crown of Glory.” It is promised to faithful pastors and elders.

5 James 1:12 tells us of a fifth crown, called “The Crown of Life.” The passage reads: “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” This is a crown for those who have endured difficult trials, temptations, suffering, persecution, and maybe even have given
their life for the cause of Christ. In Revelation 2:10, Jesus mentions this crown: “Be faithful even unto death, and I will give to you the crown of life.”

So there are at least five different crowns, and these crowns are going to be marks of identification for all of eternity. People will point to a person walking by and say, “Look, that person has the Crown of Life, he suffered for the Lord. And here comes a faithful shepherd of the flock of God.”

**Heavenly Treasures**

Not only will there be distinctions of crowns, but the Bible tells us we will receive different amounts of treasure. For example, in Matthew 6:19, Jesus says, “Do not store up for yourself treasures on earth where moths and vermin destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourself treasures in Heaven where moths and vermin do not destroy, where thieves do not break in and steal, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

You need to understand that this statement by Jesus is a command. Jesus is not saying, “Well, let Me give you some good investment strategy that you can take or leave.” No, He’s giving us a command here. He’s saying, “Do not store up your treasures on this earth. They are temporary. Thieves break in and steal them. Some rust, and some are eaten by moths. Instead, lay up your treasures in Heaven because they will last forever. Thieves can’t break in and steal them, they won’t rust, they won’t rot, they are forever.”

In 1 Timothy 6:17-19 Paul also speaks of treasures in Heaven. He says:

17) Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

18) Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

19) In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

So, Jesus and Paul both exhort us to “lay up treasures in Heaven.” How do we do that? Paul tells us how in the passage above. He says, “Do good. Do good to other people because you are a follower of Jesus Christ. Be rich in good deeds and what you do for other people. Be generous in your giving, your financial giving. Be willing to share.” And in doing this He says, “That’s how you send it on ahead.” There will be treasures awaiting you in Heaven that you will enjoy forever.

**Levels of Glory**

The Bible also tells us that there will be distinctions of glory that will be revealed in us. Consider these words of Paul in Romans 8:18: “For I consider that the present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us.” He adds in 2 Corinthians 4:

17) For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all [our sufferings].

18) So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

So Paul says that when trouble comes into your life, and you respond by continuing to trust God, continuing to have faith in Him, and continuing to serve Him with afflictions, those sufferings are working for you an eternal weight of glory. And he says no matter how hard it is right now, it is working such a weight of glory that you will look back one day and say, “What I suffered was no big deal.”

In fact, it is interesting to me that when we go through difficulties, we usually spend much of our time praying for God to get us out of them. I think we are going to stand before the Lord one day, and when we see that all the troubles we went through while we were faithfully trusting Him were compiling for us an eternal weight of glory, we will wish we had experienced more troubles!

**Degrees of Responsibility**

Another type of reward the Bible mentions relates to different responsibilities that we will have during both the Millennium and the Eternal State. Jesus mentioned this reward in a very famous parable in Luke 19:11-27, called The Parable of the Minas. It is different from the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30).

A mina was worth about three month’s wages. Jesus told a story about a nobleman who entrusted one mina to each of ten of his servants and told them to do business with the money. Later, when he called them to account to him what they had done with the money, he rewarded each one a degree of ruling authority in proportion to what that servant had earned with the money. He put one over ten cities, another over five, and so on.

This passage clearly indicates that one day we are going to rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom. But the responsibility that is assigned to each of us in both the Millennium and the Eternal State will be directly related to how faithful we are right now in this life. The more you do for Christ now, the more responsibility He will give you then. It really does matter how you live today.

**God’s Memory**

The Bible says in Hebrews 6:10, “God is not unjust; He will not forget your work, and the love that you have shown Him as you have helped His people and you continue to help them.” This passage is saying, “God has not forgotten anything you’ve ever done for Him.”

Well, some of you have been believers a long time. Many of you gave your life to Christ as a child. I gave my life to Him.
when I was eight years old. I don’t remember a whole lot of the things that I did for Christ when I was eight, nine and ten years old. I remember serving Him as best as I knew how. I remember as a teenager trying my best to serve the Lord in what understanding I had of what it meant to live a Christian life. But I’ll be honest with you, I don’t remember a great deal of it. But the Bible says God remembers every bit of it.

The Bible says in Malachi 3:16 that there is a Book of Remembrance in which God has written down all of the things that you have done for Him. All those times you prayed for someone, but you’ve forgotten about it. God says, “I haven’t forgotten.” All those times that maybe you walked up to somebody who was poor and needy, or somebody on the street walked up to you, and because you are a follower of Jesus you gave them something, and you don’t even remember it. But Jesus remembers it.

And one of these days you are definitely going to stand before your Savior, but your sins are not going to be thrown up on the screen. Rather, what is going to be brought to light are all the things that you did for Jesus in that secret place, in that closet where the Father saw you praying and nobody else knew you were praying. He will remember all those donations you made to advance His kingdom. He will remember all those times that you were kind, you were sweet, you were encouraging to someone.

Like the time you cooked a meal and took it to someone to comfort them. Or you went to a hospital to visit and encourage someone. All the things you did because you’re a follower of Jesus and because you’re motivated by love for Him and love for others. These things will be remembered and rewarded. The Lord will not forget even one of them.

In Matthew 10:41-42 Jesus tells us: “Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

Jesus is setting the bar really low. He is saying, “I’m going to remember every cup of cold water that you gave someone because you were a follower of Me, because you were trying to bless someone else because of your walk with Me.” He is promising that everything you do for Him will one day be rewarded. This means that what you do to serve Jesus really matters.

Service Rewards

The last passage I want to share with you is Ephesians 6:5-6. In these two verses Paul is talking to slaves in the Roman Empire who are believers, and he’s telling them how they ought to live and respond to their earthly masters. He wrote: “Slaves obey your earthly masters with respect, and fear, with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ doing the will of God from your heart, serve wholeheartedly.”

Now, Paul is talking about our work — our occupations. He’s telling us, “Serve wholeheartedly as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one of you for whatever good you do, whether you be slave, or free.”

Maybe some of you have become bored with your jobs. Maybe you are no longer motivated to go to work because you feel what you are doing is inconsequential. If so, you need to keep in mind you’re serving the Lord when you go to work. So, serve your employer as if you were serving Jesus. If it’s making widgets or making beds, whatever it might be, do it wholeheartedly as unto the Lord your Savior. He will not forget it, and on that great day when He hands out those rewards, you’ll be fully rewarded from the Lord for your faithful service.

A Plea

If you are a person reading this who has never given your life to Christ, then you’re not prepared for eternity and you are not a candidate for rewards. But you can get prepared right this moment by giving your life to Jesus Christ. How do you do that? The Bible says that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). Just call, “Lord, save me!” But in order to call out properly, the Bible says you have to believe and repent. You have to believe and have enough faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that you’re willing to call out to Him and say, “Lord, Jesus forgive me of my sins and save me from them.”

And so, if you are reading this and you’ve never given your life to Christ, then right now, wherever you are, just call out, and God will hear your prayer. The record book of your sin will be cancelled, and you’ll begin a brand new life. You can start living your life for something that will matter for all of eternity.

To the Saints of God who are reading this, I encourage you, brothers and sisters, to remember that your labors in the Lord are not in vain. Keep on keeping on. Live your life for Jesus, because what you do now has a profound impact on what you will have and what you will do for all of eternity.

Glenn Meredith is the pastor of Brookhaven Church in McKinney, Texas, the church where Dr. Reagan and his wife, Ann, are members. Glenn is a native of Louisiana. In 1983, he graduated from the Criswell College in Dallas with a Master’s in Biblical Studies. He has served Brookhaven Church for more than 30 years. The church was recently moved from Dallas to the Frisco/McKinney area, the fastest growing area in Texas. He and his wife, Carol, are the parents of two children, a son and a daughter, and they have two grandchildren.

This article is a summary of the presentation that Pastor Meredith gave at Lamb & Lion’s annual Bible conference in July 2017. The entire presentation is available on a video album produced by the ministry. That album is titled, “Living with Hope in the End Times.” It contains six presentations on three DVDs. It sells for $25, including the cost of shipping. To order, call 972-736-3567 Mon thru Fri, 8am to 5pm CT.
The Wrath of God
Is it a Myth or a Reality?

Dr. David R. Reagan

Back in the mid-1990s, a popular radio talk show host on an Oklahoma City secular station interviewed me live on the air via telephone. He had seen an article I had written about the financial accountability of Christian ministries, and he had liked it.

He began the interview by graciously giving me the opportunity to talk non-stop for about ten minutes about the way God had transformed my life and called me into the ministry. We then moved on to a discussion of the scandals that had recently rocked the Christian community nationwide.

The Unmentionable Word

Everything went well until the host asked me to summarize the fundamental message of my ministry. I responded by saying that God had called me to proclaim “the soon return of Jesus in wrath.”

Before I could proceed with my explanation, the announcer cut me short. “What do you mean, ‘wrath’?” he asked.

“I mean that Jesus is going to return very soon to pour out the wrath of God upon those who have rejected God’s love and grace and mercy.”

“You God is a monster God!” he snapped. He then added, “I happen to be a Christian, and I can tell you that my God wouldn’t hurt a flea!”

That was the end of the interview. He hung up on me. I was not given an opportunity to respond to his misrepresentation of our Creator.

Satan’s Grand Deception

The radio host’s vehement response to the wrath of God did not surprise me. It is characteristic of both Christians and non-Christians, and I have encountered it many times.

Satan has sold the world a bill of goods concerning the nature of God. Most people, both Christian and non-Christian, tend to view God as being a sort of Cosmic Teddy Bear.

They see Him as big and warm and soft, full of infinite love and forgiveness. He couldn’t hurt a fly, and He certainly wouldn’t be so cruel as to condemn or harm any beings created in His own image. On the Day of Judgment, God will simply give everyone a big hug and wink at their sins.

The only problem with this wonderfully comforting image is that it is a lie straight from the pit of Hell.

The True God

Yes, the Bible teaches that God is loving, patient, caring, and forgiving (Psalm 86:15 and John 3:16). As the apostle John put it, “God is love” (1 John 4:8).

Two of my favorite passages in the Bible emphasize the personal loving nature of God. One was penned by the apostle Peter. In 1 Peter 5:6-7 he says that we are to cast all our anxieties upon God “because He cares for you.” That is a very comforting thought.

The other passage that I love to read over and over consists of words spoken by the prophet Jeremiah in Lamentations 3 (RSV):

22) The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, His mercies never come to an end;
23) they are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.
“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in Him.”

But the Bible also clearly teaches that there is another aspect of God’s character that is equally important. It is the aspect that Satan wants us to ignore, and he has been very successful in prompting ministers to overlook it. After all, it doesn’t produce popular sermons! I’m speaking, of course, of the holiness of God (Leviticus 11:44, Isaiah 6:3 and 1 Peter 1:16).

**Grace or Wrath?**

The Bible teaches that God is perfectly holy. Because of this attribute of His character, He cannot tolerate sin (Numbers 14:18). The Bible says God must deal with sin, and He does so in one of two ways — either grace or wrath.

All of us seem to know John 3:16 — a very comforting verse about God’s love for us. But few of us seem to be aware of the words recorded a few verses later in John 3:36 — words taken from a sermon by John the Baptist: “He who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

The apostle Paul emphasized this point in his preaching and teaching. In Ephesians 5 he warns against immorality, covetousness, and idolatry, and then he adds this observation: “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6).

We come under God’s grace by placing our faith in Jesus and appropriating His atoning sacrifice for our lives (1 John 1:7). There is no salvation apart from Jesus (Acts 4:10-12). Those who have rejected God’s free gift of grace in Jesus are under God’s wrath (John 3:36), and they have no one to blame but themselves.

**The Unchangeable God**

Despite the Bible’s clear teaching that our Creator is a God of both love and wrath, I never cease to be amazed at the number of pastors I run across who argue that the God of wrath is the Old Testament God and not the God of the New Testament. In the process they ignore another clear teaching of the Bible that is found in Malachi 3:6 where God, speaking of Himself, says, “I, the LORD do not change . . .”

The New Testament confirms this important point in Hebrews 13:8 where it says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.”

Nonetheless, Jesus seems always to be presented in sermons as the meek and gentle Savior who is full of grace and forgiveness. That statement is true, but it is not the full picture. Jesus castigated the Pharisees, calling them “hypocrites,” “serpents” and a “brood of vipers.”

Likewise, in His letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor, Jesus condemned the church at Thyatira for tolerating a false prophetess. He called upon the church to repent, and then He warned that if they refused to repent of their immorality, He would cast the offenders “upon a bed of sickness,” killing them with pestilence” (Revelation 2:22-23).

**Types of Wrath**

The Bible reveals several different aspects of the wrath of God:

- **Consequential Wrath** — This is what might be called “sowing and reaping wrath.” It is the wrath we bring upon ourselves when we reap what we sow through sinful living.

- **Cataclysmic Wrath** — As evidenced in disasters, either natural or man-made, like the 9/11 attacks. God allows these as a way of calling people and nations to repentance.

- **Abandonment Wrath** — The wrath exhibited by God when He turns His back on a person or a society, allowing self-destruction.

- **Eschatological Wrath** — The wrath God will unleash on all the world during the Great Tribulation.

- **Eternal Wrath** — The ultimate punishment God will inflict upon those who are consigned to Hell.

**Abandonment Wrath**

God’s wrath of abandonment is what our nation is experiencing today. Again, this type of wrath can fall on an individual as well as a society.
A biblical example of it in the life of an individual can be found in the story of Samson. Although he was mightily anointed by God to protect Israel from the Philistines, he persisted in sexual sin to the point that the Scriptures say that “the Lord departed from him” (Judges 16:20). As a result, he was captured by the Philistines and ended up committing suicide.

In Romans chapter one, the Apostle Paul strongly warns of God’s wrath of abandonment concerning nations. He asserts that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness…” (Romans 1:18). He then proceeds to tell how God does this when dealing with a nation that is in rebellion against Him.

First, God steps back and lowers the hedge of protection around the nation, allowing evil to multiply. The result is an outbreak of sexual sin (Romans 1:24-25), which is what happened in the nation in the 1960s.

If the nation refuses to repent, God takes a second step back and lowers the hedge even further (Romans 1:26-27), producing a plague of homosexuality. Again, this nation has experienced this second phase ever since the 1990s, but it gained momentum in 2003 when our Supreme Court struck down all sodomy laws.

If the nation persists in its rebellion, God will take a third step back and abandon the nation to “a depraved mind” (Romans 1:28). This depravity was manifested in this nation when our Supreme Court sanctioned same-sex marriage in June of 2015, and our President celebrated the decision by having the White House lit up in the rainbow colors of the Sexual Perversion Movement.

**The Meaning of Wrath**

Does this make God a “monster”? No! On the contrary, it proves His goodness, for how could a good God ignore the evil of sin and allow it to go unpunished? His wrath against evil will demonstrate His righteousness.

The prophet Nahum summed it up best. Writing of the love of God, he said, “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him” (Nahum 1:7). But a few verses earlier Nahum had also spoken of the holiness and wrath of God:

2) A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; The LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies.

3) The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished . . .

God’s wrath is never motivated primarily by a desire to punish. Rather, it is designed to bring people to repentance so that they might be saved. Even in His wrath, God remembers mercy.

God demonstrates His mercy in wrath by never pouring out His wrath without warning. He tried to warn Sodom and Gomorra through Abraham. He warned Noah’s world through the preaching of Noah for 120 years. He sent both Jonah and Nahum to warn the pagan city of Nineveh.

Consider too how He sent prophet after prophet to call the nations of Israel and Judah to repentance (2 Chronicles 36):

15) The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place;

16) but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy.

God’s mercy in wrath is also manifested in the fact that He always leads up to His final outpouring of wrath through a series of progressive judgments. These remedial judgments are outlined in detail in Deuteronomy 28:15-57.

This characteristic of God’s wrath is demonstrated in the prophecies concerning the Tribulation. Rather than simply pouring out His wrath on the rebellious nations of the world, destroying them in one instant of overwhelming catastrophe, He subjects the world to a series of judgments that sequentially increase in scope and intensity (Revelation 6,8-9,16).

Although most people refuse to repent in response to these judgments (Revelation 9:20-21), there is “a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues” who do repent and respond to Jesus in faith (Revelation 7:9).
These radically different responses to the wrath of God illustrate the point that was often made by Billy Graham: “The same sun that melts the butter also hardens the clay.” The wrath of God melts some hearts in repentance, but it has the effect of hardening the hearts of many others.

**Wrath and the Redeemed**

Many Christians respond negatively to Bible prophecy. It’s not at all unusual to hear a Christian say something like this: “I don’t want to hear anything about prophecy because it’s too full of gloom and doom.”

Well, there is a lot of gloom and doom for those who refuse to respond to God’s gift of love in Jesus. But there is only good news for the Redeemed.

The Old Testament ends with a passage that presents both the gloom and the joy of end time prophecy. Malachi says that when the Lord returns, the day will be “like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff” (Malachi 4:1). That’s the bad news.

But consider the good news: “But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall” (Malachi 4:2).

There is no reason for any child of God to fear the wrath of God. Paul wrote that since we have been justified by the blood of Christ, “we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him” (Romans 5:9). And in a most comforting verse, Paul told the Thessalonians that Jesus will “deliver” the Redeemed “from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10). The reason, Paul explained, is that “God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

**A Plea**

Are you under grace or wrath? The choice is yours. Jesus is coming soon. When He appears, will He be your Blessed Hope or your Holy Terror? Will you cry for the mountains to fall upon you? Or, will you go forth leaping with joy like a calf released from a stall?

God loves you and He wants you to accept His Son as your Savior so that you will come under grace and can participate in an event that will occur when Jesus returns (Isaiah:35:10):

And the ransomed of the LORD will return
And come with joyful shouting to Zion,
With everlasting joy upon their heads.
They will find gladness and joy,
And sorrow and sighing will flee away. ☮

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**Wayfaring Stranger**

A traditional American folk and gospel song dating back to the beginning of the 19th Century.

Many varieties of the lyrics exist. The version below was taken from the album, *On Joyful Wing*, by a Southern Gospel group called “SpokenFor.”

I am a poor wayfaring stranger
While traveling through this world of woe
But there’s no sickness, no toil nor danger
In that bright land to which I go

Well I’m going there to see my daughter
I’m going there no more to roam
I’m only going over Jordan
I’m only going over home

I know dark clouds will gather ‘round me
I know my way is rough and steep
But beauteous fields lie just before me
Where God’s Redeemed, their vigils keep

I’m going there to see my mother
She said she’d meet me when I come
I’m only going over Jordan
I’m only going over home

I want to wear that crown of glory
When I get home to that bright land
I want to shout salvation’s story
In concert with that blood-bought band

I’m going there to meet my Savior
Dwell with Him and never roam
I’m only going over Jordan
I’m only going over home
JFK’s Question.  
Is it yours?

(Editor’s note: This article was produced by The Prophetic Witness Movement International of England, the oldest continuing Bible prophecy ministry in the world. It was formed 100 years ago in 1917 in response to the Balfour Declaration that was issued in November of that year. The ministry is dedicated to proclaiming worldwide the soon return of Jesus. The author is Jon Ikin, one of the ministry’s council members.)

Five days before he became the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy asked evangelist Billy Graham to have lunch and play golf with him.

After the game they were driving back to the Kennedy home when the president-elect stopped the car, turned to Billy and said, “I want to ask you something. Do you believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?” The evangelist replied, “I most certainly do.” Kennedy then asked, “Well, does my church believe it?” (he was a Roman Catholic). “They have it in their creeds,” answered Billy. “They don’t preach it,” said Kennedy. “They don’t tell us much about it. I’d like to know what you think.” And so Billy Graham explained what the Bible said about this great prophetic event. (Source: Billy Graham’s book, Just As I Am, page 395.)

How many people today have the same question as the former president — but have no one to ask? Sadly many churches do not often preach the Lord Jesus’ Second Coming, and thus many people don’t know what to expect or how to prepare. This article is designed to share the answers to both those questions.

What to Expect

The Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ will come back to Earth a second time. Consider the following quotation found in Acts 1:11. (It was spoken to the original disciples of Jesus after He went back to Heaven).

This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into Heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into Heaven.

Here we are told very clearly that the Lord Jesus Christ will return one day in the future.

You will notice, as well, that it will be the “same Jesus” and not “Jesus in another form.” That’s important because some people are under the impression that the establishment of the Church is somehow the Second Coming of Christ. Others believe that a “Jesus-type figure” will fulfill this prophecy of Scripture. Both those views (along with several others) are clearly wrong. It will be the very same Lord Jesus who died on the cross for our sins and rose again who will come back in the future.

But before He does return, certain things are going to happen that the Bible tells us about. In fact there are many things that are going to happen as outlined in the prophetic portions of Scripture. So let’s simplify them down to four main things:

1. The Rapture of the Church

The Rapture is a prior return of the Lord Jesus — before the Second Coming — to remove His believers from the world and take them back to Heaven with Him. At the Second Coming He will come back with His Church to reign on the earth (see Revelation 19:11—16), whereas at the Rapture He is coming for His Church in the air to take them back to Heaven (compare Acts 1:11—16 with Revelation 19:11-16). We’ll see why this is, in a moment.

This Rapture is probably the next event on God’s timetable and will result in millions of Christians around the world being supernaturally removed from Earth suddenly at once. The Lord Jesus Himself described this event when He said, “And if I go and prepare a place for you [a reference to Heaven], I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” That’s found in John 14:3.
It will be a wonderful thing for those who know the Lord and are taken to be with Him, but very disturbing for those who are left behind. It would be good to ask yourself if you will be raptured in that day — or left behind. Please remember, He will only take those who truly know Him as their Savior and Lord. Do you?

2. The Tribulation

One of the reasons for the Rapture is to rescue the Church from something very terrible that is coming on the world, something called “The Tribulation.” This is a period of seven years when God’s wrath will be poured out on Mankind for rejecting Him and His teaching in the Bible. This period of time will include both natural and supernatural disasters.

Reading the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, we see things like mega-earthquakes, crashing meteors, and demonic activity on the earth. Some spiritualize away these passages of the Bible, turning them into little more than fables. But when they come to pass they will be all too real. It will be so bad that the Lord Jesus Himself said, “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive” (Matthew 24:22). Christians, however, live in hope and not fear as they wait for “Jesus who rescues us from the coming wrath” (1 Thessalonians 1:10). Would you like this hope?

3. The Rise of the Antichrist

The Bible warns that in the last days during the Tribulation, there will be a world leader who will deceive the majority both politically and religiously. He will set up a worldwide order of government (a “new world order”) and eventually, with the help of a false church and a false prophet, he will demand that people worship him.

When he takes power there will be no choices. His word will be law. And the Bible tells us in 1 John 4:3 that the “spirit of antichrist” is already at work in the world getting conditions right for him. He is also written about in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and Revelation 13, which we would encourage you to read for yourself. When he arrives, the only choice will be “Christ or Antichrist?” How much better to choose Christ now.

4. The Second Coming of Christ

At the end of the seven year Tribulation, the Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus will return in power and glory, defeat the Antichrist and his armies at the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16 & chapter 19), judge mankind and then set up His physical Kingdom which will be like heaven on earth!

There is, of course, much more to add to these four things but these are the main events.

How to Prepare

The most urgent thing for all of us is to be made right with God so that we will be ready to meet Him, whether that be at death or at the rapture of the Church. And to be made right with God means we need to have the issue of our sins dealt with.

You see, the Bible says we are all sinners — people who have broken God’s Law. And that’s no small thing. If God banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden for just one sin, then what chance do we have of getting to Heaven by our own goodness? We need another way, one that doesn’t depend on us.

That’s where the Lord Jesus comes in. The Bible tells us, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). God gave His Son to be our Savior (rescuer). He lived a perfect, sinless life and then died on the Cross for our sins. Because He had no sin of His own He could pay for ours and open the way for us to go to Heaven.

Today if any person puts their trust in the Lord Jesus’ saving work rather than their own good works, and asks Him to become Lord of their lives, God will forgive them and receive them as His children. Why not do this today and be ready for what lies ahead?

John F. Kennedy told Billy Graham, “We’ll have to talk about that someday.” But as far as we know he never did. Please don’t put this off. Call on the Lord today.
Three Rules Lou Holtz Wished He Knew When He Was 21

(Editors note: This article contains excerpts from a commencement address that Lou Holtz gave in 2015 at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, when he was awarded an honorary doctor’s degree. Holtz is a legendary college football coach with a lifetime record of 249 wins, 132 losses, and 7 ties. He coached at many different schools, becoming the only coach in history to lead six different teams to bowl games. The height of his success came while he was coaching at Notre Dame from 1986 to 1996. In 1988 his team went undefeated and won the national championship.)

A Commencement Address by Lou Holtz

I am humbled by receiving this honorary doctor’s degree. It is obvious that you didn’t check my high school rank before you decided to do it! I was in the lower third of my high school class. In fact, if it had not been for people like me, there would not have been any upper half of the class.

I’m not going to lecture at you or preach at you. I’m going to talk about things I believe and experiences I have had. I’m not going to talk about something I read about or heard. These are things I believe. And understand this — I’ve been 21, and none of you students have ever been 78!

Let me urge you to never lose your faith in God. There will be a tendency to get away from it. We all have a tendency to think we can do things on our own. If you want to make God laugh, you tell Him what your plans are. I have a strong faith in God, and I don’t know how people live without it.

I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth. I know! I was born in Follansbee, West Virginia. And I went by where I was born last night. I was born in the cellar at home, delivered by a man named Dr. McGraw. We had one bedroom for my sister, myself, and my parents. We had a half bath and a kitchen. Seven and a half years we lived in that place.

There was no welfare. There were no food stamps. There was no safety net, but I always had plenty to eat because every time I asked for seconds my dad would say, “No, you’ve had plenty.” My dad had only gone to the third grade. That is all the education he had.

So, why was I born with a silver spoon in my mouth? Because I was taught by my parents that life is a matter of making choices and I was to take responsibility for my choices and never blame anyone else. This is how I was raised. That is why I was born with a silver spoon. I was taught personal responsibility for the choices I made. I think that is absolutely critical.

Another important thing I have learned in life is you’re either growing or you’re dying. The tree is either growing or it’s dying. So is grass. So is a marriage. So is a business. So is a person. It doesn’t have a thing to do with age. My birthday candles cost more than the cake. But it has everything to do with me trying to get better.

When I left Notre Dame I never thought I’d coach again. Where do you go from Notre Dame? According to my mother you go directly to Heaven, you sit by the Pope. You don’t coach anymore.

Then I went to live in a town where the average age was deceased! And I discovered that I wasn’t tired of coaching. You have to have something to hope for, something to dream. And even though you have done great things so far, what’s going to happen now? [He went on to coach five years at the University of South Carolina, from 1999 to 2004.]

I want to give you a simple plan. Life doesn’t have to be complicated. I try to keep life simple. Do you realize there are only seven colors of the rainbow? Only seven. Look what Michelangelo did with those seven colors. There are only seven musical notes. Look what Beethoven did with those seven notes. There are only 10 numbers. Look what Bernie Madoff did with those ten numbers! The point I make is it doesn’t have to be complicated.

You need four things in your life. If you don’t have any of these four things in your life you are going to have a tremendous void. The four things are:

- You need something to do.
- You need someone to love.
- You need someone to believe in. In my case it is Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.
- You need something to hope for.

And there are three rules for successful living — rules I wish I had known at age 21. They are:

- Do what’s right. Keep in mind that there is never a right time to do the wrong thing. And there is never a wrong time to do the right thing. Just do what’s right.
- Do everything to the best of your ability in the time
Show people you care.

Enjoy life, have fun. You are going to have problems. You are going to have difficulties. That’s part of life. And don’t tell people about your problems. Do you know that 90% of the people don’t care? And the other 10% are glad you got them! So you are better off keeping them to yourself. You are going to have problems. But have fun with what you’re doing.

You know ladies and gentlemen, not all of us can be All-American. Not everybody can be first team. But each of you can be the best you’re capable of being. If you want to fail, you have the right to fail. That’s what’s great about this country. But you do not have the right to cause other people to fail because you don’t do everything that you’re good at. You owe it to other people to do the maximum you can at each and everything you do. This is not complicated.

In conclusion:
- If you want to be happy for an hour, eat a steak.
- If you want to be happy for a day, play golf.
- If you want to be happy for a week, go on a cruise.
- If you want to be happy for a month, buy a new car.
- If you want to be happy for a year, win the lottery.
- If you want to be happy for a lifetime, put your faith in Jesus Christ.

Thank you.

Have You Put Your Faith in Jesus?

The Bible says that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). And because all of us are sinners, we are destined for death unless the Rapture occurs first.

Sin has separated us from our Holy Creator. To be reconciled to Him required the death of a person who had never sinned — a person who did not deserve death. No such person ever existed before the birth of Jesus. Prior to that time, people sacrificed animals and offered their blood to God as a sign of repentance (Leviticus 17:11). Such sacrifices covered their sins but did not result in their forgiveness (Hebrews 9:11-16). Accordingly, when they died, they did not go to Heaven. Instead, their souls went to a holding place call Hades, to a compartment called Paradise. There they awaited the death of a perfect man whose blood would result in their complete forgiveness.

Jesus was that man. He lived a perfect, sinless life. He did not die for His sins. He died for ours. When you place your faith in Him as Lord and Savior, His blood is applied to your life and your sins are forgiven and forgotten. When Jesus ascended into Heaven, He took with Him the souls of the righteous dead, whose sins were now not only covered but forgiven (Ephesians 4:8). Since that time, when a believer dies, that person’s soul goes directly to Heaven because their faith in Jesus has purified them of all sin, making it possible for them to be reconciled to God.

Be reconciled to your Creator by putting your faith in Jesus today (Romans 5:8-9 and 10:9-11).
My pastor recently called our congregation to a 40 day prayer challenge. To assist us, he distributed copies of a remarkable book titled, *Draw the Circle* (Zondervan, 2012). It is a book about prayer — its significance and its spiritual enrichment.

It was written by Mark Batterson, the pastor of National Community Church in Washington, D.C. He and his wife, Lora, live on Capitol Hill with their three children.

The book contains 40 true, faith-building stories of God’s answers to prayer, together with deep spiritual insights by the author concerning prayer. It will inspire you to pray and keep praying as never before.

The 40 chapters are brief — three to five pages each. The intention is for one chapter to be read daily over a period of 40 days. But I found the writing, the stories and the insights to be so captivating that I finished off the book in one week’s time. I found it to be a spiritual jewel.

The author explains the title of the book as follows:

Drawing prayer circles is a metaphor that simply means “praying until God answers.” It’s a determination to pray as long as it takes, even if it takes longer than you ever imagined.

Drawing circles isn’t some magic trick to get what you want from God. God is not a genie in a bottle, and your wish is not His command. His command better be your wish. If it’s not, you won’t be drawing prayer circles; you’ll end up walking in circles . . . And getting what you want isn’t the goal; the goal is glorifying God by drawing circles around the promises, miracles and dreams He wants for you.

Below are some of the best quotes from the book:

- If you pray to God regularly, irregular things will happen on a regular basis. (page 20)
- God is great not just because nothing is too big for Him; God is also great because nothing is too small. The Sovereign One cares about every minute detail of our lives. (page 22)
- When God says no to a prayer, it doesn’t always mean no; sometimes it means not yet. It’s the right request at the wrong time. (page 129)
- The purpose of prayer is not to get what you want; the goal of prayer is to discern what God wants, what God wills. But if your prayer is in the will of God, then it is backed by the full authority of the King and His kingdom. (page 205)
- While my prayer batting average is no better than anyone else’s, I’m determined to get back into the batter’s box because I can’t get a hit if I don’t take a swing. And if I swing enough times, I’ll hit a few homers and accumulate a lot of RBIs. So, quit worrying about striking out, and swing for the fence! (page 223)
- God is offended when we ask Him to do things we can do ourselves. It’s the impossible prayers that honor God because they reveal our faith and allow God to reveal His glory. (page 43)
- The greatest tragedy in life is the prayers that go unanswered simply because they go unasked. (page 46)
- Think of worry as a prayer alarm. Every time it goes off, you put it to prayer. And when you do, you’ll discover that your anxieties will evaporate like early morning fog. (page 146)

These are only a few of the 59 quotable statements I marked in the book.

You can purchase a copy of the book for only $5 on the Internet at www.christianbooks.com. Order a copy today. You will get your socks blessed off!

Mark Batterson

New York Times Bestselling Author of *The Circle Maker*
**In Memoriam**

**Jack Hollingsworth**

(1947 – 2017)

**Dr. David R. Reagan**

On November 17, Jack Hollingsworth was called home to the Lord. His passing was sudden and unexpected.

Jack was one of the dearest friends I have ever had. He was also the featured singer on our television program and at our conferences for over 30 years. Our Thanksgiving TV program that aired the week after his death ended with Jack singing one of his most popular songs, “11:59.”

Jack was known for his passionate love of the Lord and his effervescent singing. His songs were so animated that he developed the nickname of “Jumping Jack.”

His incredible enthusiasm for the Lord was rooted in the radical transformation that Jesus performed in his life.

**An Amazing Transformation**

Jack lived homeless on the streets in an alcoholic haze for over 20 years. And just at that point when the world would have written him off as “a worthless, homeless bum,” the Lord Jesus Christ touched him and completely transformed his life.

It was 1988, and he was in Lexington, Kentucky, when he wandered into a detox center and was confronted by a feisty little (4’ 10”) female counselor named Sally. He tried to con her but got nowhere. She finally stuck her finger in his face and said, “I’m telling you in the name of Jesus, you will never be able to get drunk again.” Jack laughed. “Lady,” he said, “you are talking to a professional drunk.”

Jack left in disgust and resumed his drinking. He drank non-stop for a week, but he was unable to get a buzz. Finally, he gave up and returned to the detox center. He asked Sally to tell him more about Jesus.

Jack decided to accept Jesus as his Lord and Savior. He and Sally ended up getting married, and in 1993 they formed a ministry called Acts 29. They spent the next 22 years on the road for Jesus. They traveled all over the nation in their mobile home singing, teaching, preaching, counseling and praying. In the process they touched countless lives for eternity.

In 2015 Sally suffered a major stroke and ended up bedfast. Jack responded by cutting back their travel schedule and committing himself to serving as her caregiver 24/7. They settled in a mobile home park in the panhandle of Florida where Jack began holding Bible studies for the residents. That’s where they were living when Jack died. Sally will now be going to live with her daughter in Kentucky.

Jack was a walking miracle of God’s transforming power. What happened to him is proof positive that God can change anyone who surrenders to Jesus. I praise God for never giving up on Jack, and I praise Him for bringing Jack and Sally into my life.

The great 19th Century pastor and evangelist, Dwight L. Moody once wrote: “Folks, someday you will hear the news that Dwight L. Moody is dead. Don’t you believe it. I shall be more alive than I ever was!” I have to smile when I think of those words as they apply to Jack because I am certain that he is jumping and singing in the presence of Jesus. ✝
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Wow! What a Lineup!

The 2018 Lamb & Lion annual Bible conference has an unprecedented lineup of speakers and musicians.

The Friday night concert will be provided by a bluegrass Christian band called *Southern Raised*. It is composed of three sisters and their brother. And they are fantastic.

In past years we have charged for the Friday night session that included a banquet, concert and keynote speaker. This year we are dispensing with the banquet and opening up the Friday night session to everyone who registers for the conference.

On Friday evening, the concert by *Southern Raised* will be followed by the keynote address which will be delivered by Robert Jeffress, the Pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas.

The five Saturday sessions will feature the following speakers:

- **Bill Koenig**: White House correspondent and expert on Israel.
- **Jan Markell**: Founder of Olive Tree Ministries and national radio personality.
- **Billy Crone**: Pastor and evangelist who has become an Internet sensation.
- **Jonathan Cahn**: Messianic rabbi and bestselling author.
- **Dave Reagan**: Founder and senior evangelist of Lamb & Lion Ministries.

The conference theme is “God’s Prophetic Voices to America,” and each of the speakers will present the message for our nation that God has laid on their hearts. On Saturday, before each speaker, we will be led in worship by a wonderful husband and wife team, Randy and Dawn Wills.

The theme verse for the conference is Jeremiah 1:10 — “Know for certain that I hereby give you [the prophetic voices] the authority to announce to nations and kingdoms that they will be uprooted and torn down, destroyed and demolished, rebuilt and firmly planted” (NET).

Registration opens January 1, 2018. The conference will be held on July 13 & 14 at the Marriott convention center in Allen, TX, a suburb of Dallas. You can register on our website at lamblion.com or by calling our office at 972-736-3567.
Battle Tour of Israel

We are offering a very unique pilgrimage to the Holy Land this coming May that we are calling "The Battle for Israel Tour."

It will focus on sites where biblical battles were fought. It will also feature sites where modern day battles have been fought and sites where Bible prophecy says future battles will occur. We are also trying to make arrangements for the group to visit an Israeli Army camp.

The tour will be led by our Assistant Evangelist, Tim Moore. Tim is a Colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, and he is a graduate of the Air Force War College where he wrote his thesis on the use of Israeli air power during the Six Day War of 1967. Tim is also a pilot instructor for UPS, and he is serving his tenth year as a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives.

Tim is an expert on Bible prophecy and has hosted several pilgrimages to the Holy Land for this ministry. He was trained to be a host by Dr. Reagan. This is his first time to conduct this unique tour.

The dates for the tour are May 19-30 (12 days). The cost is $4,200 per person. This price includes airfare, bus transportation within Israel, hotels, all entrance fees and three meals each day. The only extra is a fee for tips.

For greater details, consult the itinerary posted on our website (lamblion.com) or call our office and request a brochure. Our office number is 972-736-3567. Call Monday thru Friday between 8am and 5pm, Central time.

Don’t miss this opportunity to see parts of Israel that are never visited on a regular pilgrimage.

Regional Conference

Our first regional conference was held last October in Frankfort, Kentucky. Our second one is scheduled to be held May 18-19 in San Jacinto, California at The 412 Church. This is a Calvary Chapel megachurch that is pastored by Tom Hughes.

The name of the church is derived from three scripture verses:

- **Acts 4:12** — “There is salvation in no one else [except Jesus] . . .”
- **Ephesians 4:12** — “…for the equipping of the saints for the work of service . . .”
- **Hebrews 4:12** — “For the Word of God is living and active . . .”

San Jacinto, California is located east of Los Angeles, about halfway between Riverside and Palm Springs.

The conference theme will be “What on Earth is God Doing?” It will start on Friday evening, May 18 with a concert by a Messianic Jewish band called Lev Shelo (“His Heart”), followed by the keynote address which will be delivered by Billy Crone. Billy is the pastor of a church in Las Vegas, Nevada, and his video teachings have made him an Internet sensation. His topic will be “God is in Control.”

The conference will continue all day on Saturday, May 19, with five additional sessions, each of which will be opened with a song by Lev Shelo. The Saturday speakers and their topics will be:

- Dave Reagan: “God is Preparing Israel for Salvation”
- Don Perkins: “God is Warning of His Son’s Soon Return”
- Nathan Jones: “God is Using Technology to Reach the World with the Gospel”
- Tom Hughes: “God is Calling America to Repentance”
- Dave Reagan: “God is Warning America of Imminent Judgment”

The conference is free of charge, but registration is required.

The Lamplighter
January - February 2018
Television Update

Interviews Galore!

We have been shooting TV interviews non-stop for the past three months, so many in fact, that we have a total of eight that have not yet been broadcast. They include programs with Andy Woods, Billy Crone, Mike Riddle, Jimmy Phillips, John Kinley, Doug Greenwold, Shea Houdmann, and Tom Hughes.

Andy Woods is the president of the Chafer Theological Seminary in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Billy Crone is the Internet sensation who pastors a church in Las Vegas, Nevada. Mike Riddle is the head of an outstanding Creation ministry. Jimmy Phillips is a Bible prophecy preacher who recently completed 70 years of ministry and is still going strong. John Kinley is a prolific biblical writer who has recently turned his attention to Bible prophecy. Doug Greenwold heads up a ministry that focuses on helping people better understand the Bible by considering all aspects of context. Shea Houdmann is the founder of the great website called GotQuestions.org. Tom Hughes is the pastor of a California megachurch called The 412 Church.

We continue to get a great response to our TV program, and we continue to look for additional broadcast outlets. We are hoping to expand our program soon to stations in Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky. Pray that this will prove possible.

Keep in mind that you can go to our website anytime and watch our TV programs on demand. The same is true at the other Internet networks that are listed on this page.

Television Broadcast Schedules

National Networks:

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

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

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

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

FaithUSA — Thurs. 4:00pm CT, DISH 269 and web streaming (myfaithusa.com).

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

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

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

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

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

Walk TV — Sun. 7:30am CT, 265 affiliate stations nationwide. To find a station in your area, go to https://thewalktv.wordpress.com and click on the “Affiliates” tab.

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

Regional Networks:

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

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

KDAF — Sun. 8:00am CT. Broadcast station covering the Dallas - Ft. Worth area. Channel 33.

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

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

WCCB — Sun. 7:00am ET. Broadcast station in Charlotte, NC (ccbcharlotte.com).

WTOG-TV — Sun. 8:30 ET. Broadcast station covering Tampa and St. Petersburg, FL (http://cwtampa.cbslocal.com).

Internet Networks:

Our programs are available on demand on these websites.

HisChannel — hischannel.com

YouTube — youtube.com/user/ChristinProphecy

GodTube — godtube.com

Truli — truli.com

Vimeo — vimeo.com

DailyMotion — dailymotion.com/us

Lamb & Lion — lamblion.com
Bible Prophecy Study Resources

The miraculous fulfillment of Bible prophecy among the Jewish people and its meaning as a sign of the Lord’s soon return. A 250 page book about four end time prophecies fulfilled in Jewish history before the beginning of the 20th Century, seven that were fulfilled in whole or in part during that century, and those that are yet to be fulfilled in the future. The book concludes by explaining the importance of these fulfilled prophecies to the Church. $20, including shipping.

A fascinating survey of all the wars that the Bible portrays for the end times. Most people have heard of only one end time war, and that is the War of Armageddon. But Bible prophecy presents nine wars that will occur in the end times, both before and during the Tribulation and at the end of the Millennium. This presentation was recorded before a live audience, and it received a sensational response when it was broadcast in two parts over national television. $20, including shipping.

Are you looking for a great present for a child or grandchild? This 28 page book is designed for pre-school and elementary kids. It focuses on the blessings that God has promised the world when Jesus returns. Beautifully illustrated in full color. Large in format (8.5x11”). Durable cover. Teaching tips for parents. Coloring page at the end. $10, including the cost of shipping. Call for quantity prices.

Are we really living in the season of the Lord’s return? And, if so, what is the evidence? In this 50 minute presentation taped before a live audience Dr. Reagan presents 50 signs the Bible tells us to look for that will signal the season of the Lord’s return. And he points out that every one of them is currently on the scene. A lively presentation full of illustrations. Study it yourself and then show it to your church. $20, including the cost of shipping.

The messages of 13 prophetic voices calling our nation to repentance and warning of impending destruction. A fascinating overview of four prophetic voices in the past and nine who are current today, with a summary chapter by Dr. Reagan in which he responds to the question: “Is there any hope for America?” Dr. Reagan considers this to be the most important book he has ever written, containing the most urgent message. 285 pages, with full color photos throughout. $20, including shipping.

The world seems to be falling to pieces before our very eyes. Is there any hope, or are we doomed to disaster? This album contains three DVD discs with a total of six presentations that were made at the Lamb & Lion 2017 Bible conference. Presenters include Ed Hindson, Tommy Ice, Don Perkins, Glenn Meredith, Andy Woods and Dave Reagan. Approximately 5 hours in length. Great for both individual and group study. $25, including the cost of shipping.
**Ministry News**

**Schedule of Activities —**

**January:**
Vic Batista in Miami, FL, hosts a radio Bible teaching program with Nathan Jones (3, 10, 17, 24, 31), 5:30 pm ET on 102.3 FM. Also streamed on Facebook & Twitter.
Dave Reagan attends annual board meeting of Acts 29 Ministries in Panama City, FL (5).

**February:**
Vic Batista & Nathan Jones radio program (7, 14, 21, 28).
Tim Moore at a men’s retreat sponsored by The Evangelical Free Church in Green Valley, AZ (16-17).

**March:**
Vic Batista & Nathan Jones radio program (7, 14, 21, 28).
Dave Reagan at the Steeling the Mind Conference at Coeur d’Alene Resort in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho (3).
Candlelight Christian Fellowship in Coeur d’Alene, ID (4).

**April:**
Vic Batista & Nathan Jones radio program (4, 11, 18, 25).
Dave Reagan at the annual prophecy conference in Saskatoon, Canada (13-14).
Dave Reagan at The Brookhaven Church in McKinney, TX (29).

**May:**
Vic Batista & Nathan Jones radio program (2, 9, 16, 23, 30).
Lamb & Lion Regional Conference at the 412 Church in San Jacinto, CA (18-19).
Special “Battle Tour” of Israel led by Tim Moore (19-30).

**Holy Land Calendar —**

Our annual Holy Land calendar is ready for distribution. It contains a beautiful full-color picture for each month of the year. And in addition to key American holidays, it indicates the dates for all the Jewish holidays and feasts. It is printed on heavy-duty paper. It sells for $10, including the cost of mailing. You can place your order through our website at lamblion.com, or you can call 972-736-3567 Monday thru Friday, 8am to 5pm Central time. The incredibly beautiful church featured on the cover is the Russian Orthodox Church of Mary Magdalene in Jerusalem.

**Studying with Lamb & Lion Materials —**

Members of the Christian Life Church in Austin, Texas, which is pastored by Rex D. Johnson, are studying the last twelve books of the Old Testament using Nathan Jones’ excellent book about the Minor Prophets as a guide. Nathan’s book, which was co-authored by Steve Howell, is titled, *12 Faith Journeys of the Minor Prophets*. It sells for $20, including the cost of shipping.

**Ministry Goals —**
We have two very important goals we have been asking the Lord to help us achieve:

- 100,000 subscribers to our *Lamplighter* magazine. We currently have around 70,000. Please recommend this magazine to your family members and friends, and be sure to tell them that the email digital copy is free of charge.
- 3,000 Prophecy Partners. We currently have about 2,600. If you are not a Prophecy Partner, please consider becoming one. We need your financial support to sustain our worldwide outreach through publications, videos, television and the Internet. You can find the details about our Prophecy Partner Program on our website at www.lamblion.com. Thanks for your consideration!

**Ministries & Missions —**
We are heavily involved in supporting both domestic ministries and foreign missions. We provide regular monthly support to eight ministries here in the United States and 15 foreign missions. We also conduct special fund-raising projects from time to time to help other ministries and missions. For example, we have been raising funds for several years now to help an evangelist in Nigeria who is providing food, shelter and clothing to more than 400 Christian refugees who are victims of Muslim violence. Recently we were able to raise $6,500 to make it possible for him to drill a water well and supply it with casing, pumps and storage tanks. This was their most desperate need. Did you know that more than 50% of all illnesses in Third World countries are due to impure water?

**The New Year —**
Please join with us in praying daily, *MARANATHA!* ♡
New Video Album
by Nathan Jones

Will Islam conquer the entire world? Birth statistics alone certainly predict so!

Terrorist attacks are on the rise, reaching ever closer and closer to home. Jihadists scream across the nightly news, “Death to the Jews and the Great Satan!” Evil organizations such as ISIS horrifically slaughter Christians across the Middle East. Mass migrations of Muslims penetrate European suburbs, crushing ancient societies under the weight of Islamic immigration. Entire cultures are transformed by the suffocating Sharia Law as whole neighborhoods morph into No-Go Zones where police fear to patrol.

The West, it appears, remains under siege by the ever-growing ambitions of Islam, with no hope of relief in sight. Just how far then will Islam extend into Western society? And, will the world that we live in today look anything like the world in which our children and grandchildren will live in tomorrow?

And, most importantly, what does Bible prophecy have to say about the fate of Islam? Does the Bible offer us any hope?

These poignant questions, and many more, are answered by Nathan Jones in his gripping teaching concerning the role Islam plays in the end times. To understand Islam’s goals and ambitions, Nathan takes the viewer into the mind of the Muslim. He points out the reasons behind their actions, and explains the Koranic teachings that fuel the terrorist attacks and rising death toll. You’ll be taken back in time to the Seventh Century to discover the foundations of Islam, why it has spread so rapidly over the centuries, and what apocalyptic scenarios Muslims believe will prophetically occur in the near future.

As a bonus, the video concludes with an explanation of six different ways you can reach a Muslim for Jesus Christ.

The video runs one hour in length. Nathan is the Associate Evangelist and Web Minister for Lamb & Lion Ministries. He also serves as the co-host of the ministry’s television program, “Christ in Prophecy.”

The album sells for $20, including the cost of shipping. You can place your order through our website at lamblion.com, or call our office at 972-736-3567, Monday thru Friday, 8am to 5pm Central time. Please consider sharing this vitally relevant teaching with your pastor and Bible study group.