


LAMPLIGHTER

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

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The
Bethlehem
Miracle



Observations by the Editor

A Question of Priorities

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Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 919
McKinney, TX 75070

Shipping Address:
2069 County Road 463
Princeton, TX 75407

Telephone: 972/736-3567

Fax: 972/734-1054

Sales: 1-800/705-8316

Email: lamblion@lamblion.com

Web site:
<http://www.lamblion.com>

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When the terrible attack on America occurred, I was in the midst of preparing this issue of our magazine. I was immediately confronted with the question of whether or not I should change the cover picture from one depicting the serenity of the Nativity to one showing the viciousness of terrorism. It proved to be an easy choice. I opted for the more important story.

What could possibly be more significant than the amazing fact that God became flesh so that He could live and die for the sins of Mankind? I never cease to be awed by the indescribable love that prompted Him to give up His heavenly glory and come to earth, knowing full well that He would be rejected, tormented and crucified by the very beings He came to save.

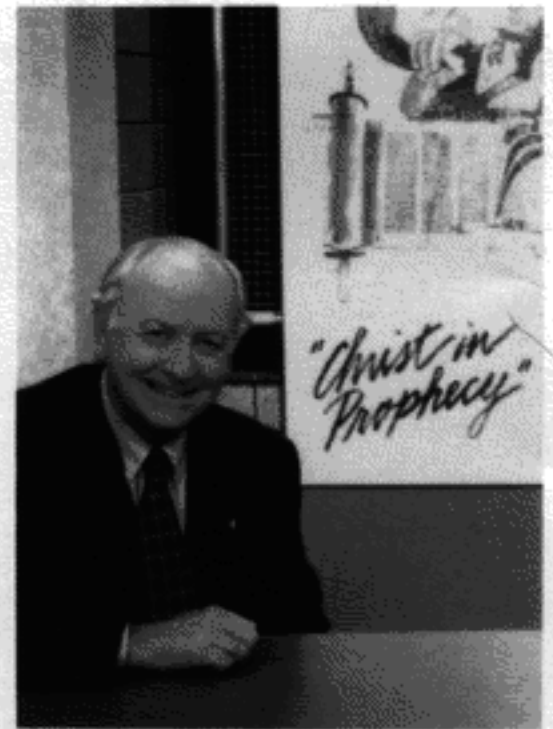
A Summary Word

The word which I think best summarizes the Bethlehem miracle is the Hebrew word, *chedseod* (pronounced kheh'—sed). It is translated in the New American Standard Version as **lovingkindness**.

Here's how Eugene H. Peterson sums up the incarnation in his paraphrase of the New Testament, called *The Message*:

"He [Jesus] had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became *human!* Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death — and the worst kind of death at that: a crucifixion.

"Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth — even those long ago dead and buried — will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father." (Philippians 2:6-11)



Dr. David Reagan

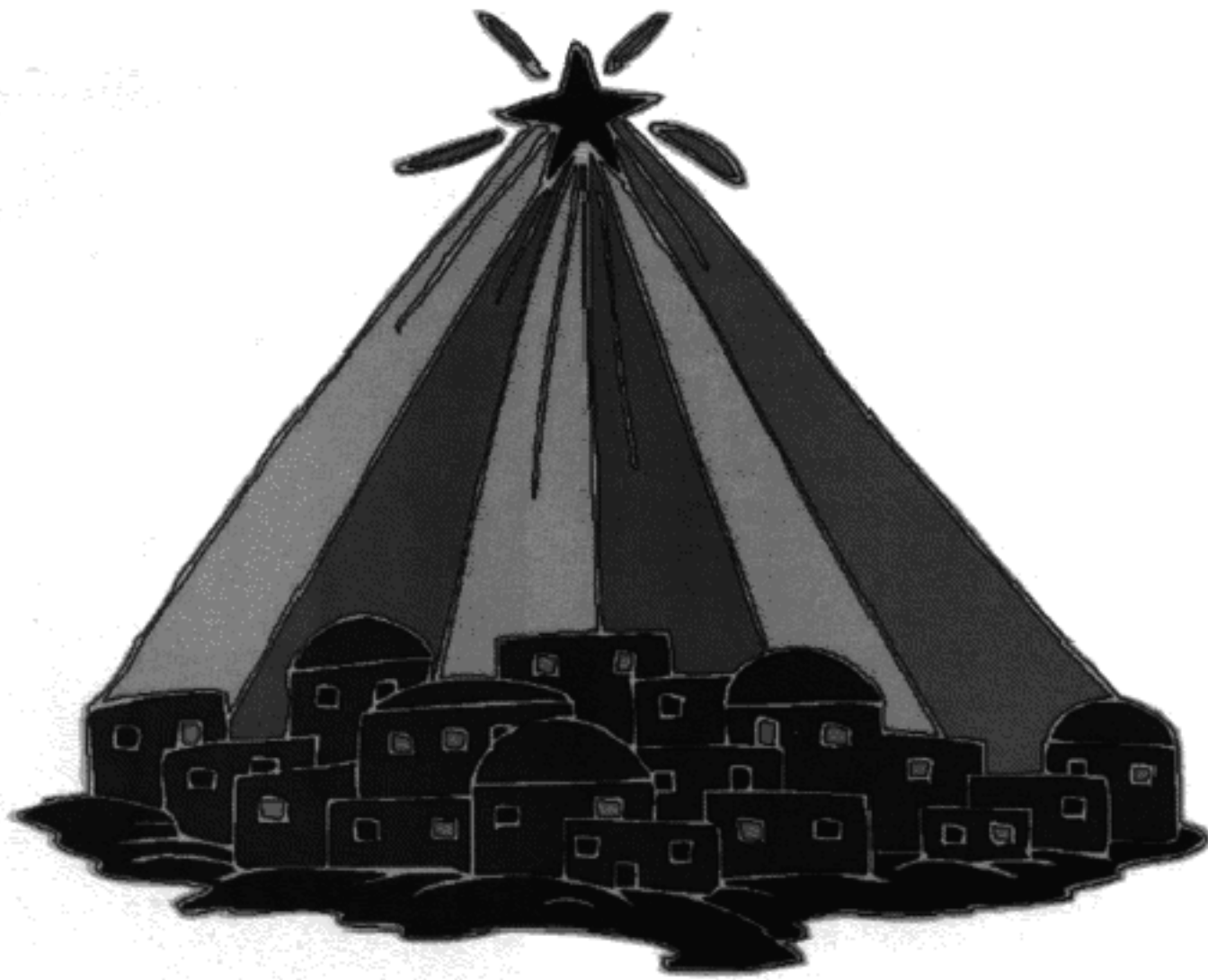
The Attack on America

We certainly need to be reminded of the Lord's lovingkindness in the aftermath of the terrible terrorist attack on our nation. The attack was so horrendous and the long term effects so enormous, that I felt compelled to expand this issue of our magazine to include an in-depth analysis from a biblical viewpoint. You will find that analysis beginning on page 12.

I praise God that at this critical time in our nation's history, we have so many people in top positions of our government who are born-again Christians. They need our prayers for supernatural wisdom.

In addition to praying for our leaders, I am also praying that the attack, and the stock market crash that followed it, will serve as a wake-up call to our nation spiritually, and that the result will be a wave of repentance that will result in the salvation of many souls.

Another prayer of mine is that Americans will finally understand what the people of Israel have had to live with on a daily basis for many years. We have demanded that they negotiate with the terrorists and that they show "restraint" in response to acts of terrorism. Now the shoe is on the other foot, and I do not hear any talk of negotiation with Osama bin Laden, nor do I hear calls for "restraint." ☆



The Bethlehem Miracle A Testimony to God's Faithfulness

Dr. David R. Reagan

Every year at Christmas time I am reminded of the remarkable prophecies concerning the birth of Jesus and how they substantiate His deity and the faithfulness of God. Let's take a look at some of those prophecies.

The Timing of the Birth

The timing of the Messiah's birth had been indicated in Genesis 49:10 in words spoken by Jacob on his deathbed to his son Judah: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah . . . until Shiloh comes, and to Him shall be the obedience of the peoples."

The term "Shiloh" was recognized by the Jewish rabbis as a Messianic title. The "scepter" refers to the judicial power of the nation. Thus, this prophecy states that the Messiah will come at a time when the nation's judicial power has been removed.

Although Judah was deprived of its national sovereignty during the 70 year period of Babylonian captivity, it never lost its scepter, for the Jews were allowed to have their own judges even while in captivity.

Josh McDowell, in his book, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, points out that "the first visible sign of the beginning of the removal of the scepter from Judah came about when Herod the Great, who had no Jewish blood, succeeded the Maccabean princes who belonged to the tribe of Levi and who were the last Jewish kings to reign in Jerusalem."

The crucial turning point came soon after Herod's death when, in about 7 AD, the Romans removed the power of the Sanhedrin Council in Judah to pronounce the death penalty. Thus the scepter (the supreme judicial power) passed from Judah.

There is a notation about this in the Talmud (the Jewish oral tradition). The Talmud states that on this occasion the members of the Sanhedrin were overtaken by "a general consternation." Incredibly, it is further recorded that they "covered their heads with ashes and their bodies with sackcloth, exclaiming: 'Woe unto us, for the scepter has departed from Judah, and the Messiah has not come!'"

What they did not realize was that Jesus the Messiah had been born around 4 BC during the last years of Herod (Matthew 2:1), so "Shiloh" had arrived shortly before the scepter departed — just as prophesied!

The Place of the Birth

The place of the Messiah's birth had also been precisely prophesied five hundred years earlier by the prophet Micah: "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel" (Micah 5:2).

Have you ever wondered what the term, "Ephrathah," means in this passage? It is a geographical designation to indicate precisely which Bethlehem is being identified. It's like differentiating between Springfield, Missouri and Springfield, Illinois.

The point is that there was another Bethlehem in the land of Israel in the area to the north near the Sea of Galilee. It had been allotted to the tribe of Zebulun.

By specifying the area of Ephrathah, the prophecy of Micah made it clear that the Bethlehem that would host the birth of the Messiah would be the one in the south of Israel near Jerusalem. In fulfillment of this very precise prophecy, Matthew tells us that "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea" (Matthew 2:1).

The Nature of the Birth

It had also been prophesied that the special child born in

Bethlehem would be both human and divine. Daniel emphasized the Messiah's humanity when he referred to Him as "the Son of Man" (Daniel 7:13). Isaiah stressed His divinity when He said that the Messiah would be called "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

His divine nature was also indicated in other prophecies about His birth. For example, the first Messianic prophecy in the Bible is one spoken by God Himself in the Garden of Eden when He told Satan that he would one day be defeated by the One who would be born of "the seed of woman" (Genesis 3:15). This seems to be a clear indication that the Messiah would be born miraculously through a virgin. Thousands of years later Isaiah specifically prophesied that the birth would occur in this manner: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child and bear a son . . ." (Isaiah 7:14).

It was further foretold by Isaiah that the Messiah would be given a name that would signify His divinity. He will be called "Immanuel," said Isaiah, which means "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14). Six hundred years later when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her that she would be the mother of the Messiah, he specified that she was to name the baby Yeshua (Luke 1:31). That name in Hebrew means "God's Salvation" (Matthew 1:21).

Other details prophesied about the Messiah's birth included the presentation of gifts to Him by kings (Psalm 72:10-11 and Matthew 2:1-12), the slaughter of the infants of His birthplace (Jeremiah 31:15 and Matthew 2:16), and His sojourn in Egypt (Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:11-15).



The Celebration of the Birth

The conception and birth of the Messiah were celebrated in some remarkable prophetic hymns. Mary prophesied in a song of rejoicing that the child she had conceived was evidence that God's "mercy is upon generation after generation" (Luke 1:50). She went on to prophesy that He would "scatter the proud," "bring down rulers," "exalt the humble," and "fill the hungry" (Luke 1:52-53).

Her relative, the priest Zacharias, also sang a prophetic song of celebration when his son, John the Baptist, was born. Referring to the baby in Mary's womb, he proclaimed that God "has raised up a horn of salvation for us" (Luke 1:69). He then declared that his own son would be called "the prophet of the Most High," and he prophesied that his son would "go before the Lord to prepare His ways" (Luke 1:76). He concluded his song with one of the most beautiful poetic prophecies concerning the Messiah that can be found anywhere in Scripture: "Because of the tender mercy of our God . . . the Sunrise from on high shall visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78-79).

The next prophetic song of celebration was sung on the night of the Messiah's birth when an angel appeared to the shepherds



The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, originally built in 326 AD. The current structure dates back to the Sixth Century. It is supposedly located over the site of the birth of Jesus. This is the oldest church in Israel.

of Bethlehem and proclaimed: "Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). That angel was suddenly joined by a multitude of angels who sang a triumphant chorus: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased" (Luke 2:13-14).

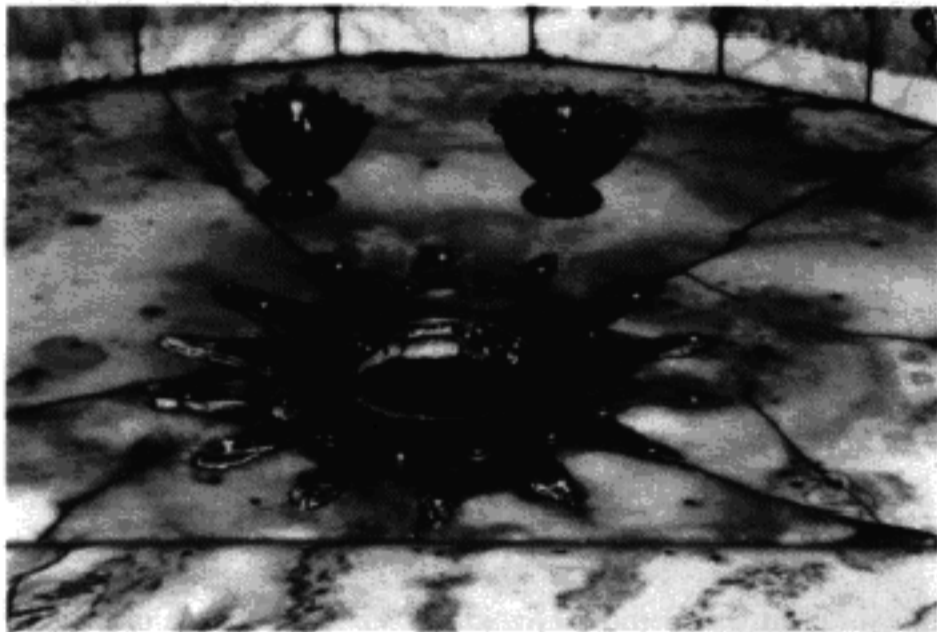
בִּי-יָלַד תֵּלֵד-לָנוּ בֶן נֹתַר לָנוּ וְתַהֵי הַמְּשִׁיחָה
עַל-שִׁכְמוֹ וְיִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ פֶּלֶא יִזְעַן אֶל-גְּבוּרַת
אֲבִי-עַד שִׁדְ-שְׁלֹמֹם: יִשְׁעֵיהֶוּ טָהֵר

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, Mighty
God, Everlasting
Father, Prince
of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6



The final prophetic song related to the Messiah's birth was sung by a "righteous and devout" man of Jerusalem by the name of Simeon. The Holy Spirit had come upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die before he saw the Messiah (Luke 2:25-26). He was given that glorious privilege forty days after the Messiah's birth when the parents of Jesus came to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate their baby to God.

Simeon took the Christ child in his arms, thanked the Lord, and then sang: "My eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples — a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel" (Luke 2:30-32).



This 14 point silver star supposedly marks the spot inside the Church of the Nativity where Jesus was born. It bears the words, "Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus hatus est" — meaning, "Here Jesus Christ was born to the Virgin Mary."

The Significance of the Birth Prophecies

The fulfillment of all these prophecies in the life of one person, Jesus of Nazareth, is proof positive that He was who He said He was, namely, the Messiah of God (Mark 14:62 and Luke 22:70).

God's faithfulness in fulfilling each of these prophecies in detail is also significant because it gives us assurance that He will likewise faithfully fulfill all the prophecies He has given to Christians regarding the soon return of Jesus.

A God of Prophecy

Our God knows the future and has the audacity to proclaim it (Isaiah 46:10). He also has the power to see to it that what He proclaims will come to pass (Isaiah 46:11). Most important, He is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9), so we can rest in His promises.

Let's rejoice that the Bethlehem birth so long ago is proof positive that the one born there will soon return in glory as the King of kings and the Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). ❖

A Fresh Look at the First Advent

"The Jewish New Testament" is a fresh, stimulating translation that expresses the Jewishness of the New Testament writings. The translation was done by David H. Stern, a Messianic Jew who lives in Israel. Here is his rendition of Luke 1:26-42:

In the sixth month, the angel Gavri'el was sent by God to a city in the Galil called Natzeret, to a virgin engaged to a man named Yosef, of the house of David; the virgin's name was Miryam.

Approaching her, the angel said, "Shalom, favored lady! Adonai is with you!" She was deeply troubled by his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Miryam, for you have found favor with God. Look! You will become pregnant, you will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Yeshua. He will be great, he will be called Son of Ha'Elon [the Highest]. Adonai, God, will give him the throne of his forefather David; and he will rule the House of Ya'akov forever — there will be no end to his Kingdom."

"How can this be," asked Miryam of the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered her,

The Ruach HaKodesh [Holy Spirit] will
come over you,
the power of Ha'Elon will cover you,
Therefore the holy child born to you
will be called the Son of God.

"You have a relative, Elisheva, who is an old woman; and everyone says she is barren. But she has conceived a son and is six months pregnant! For with God, nothing is impossible."

Miryam said, "I am the servant of Adonai; may it happen to me as you have said."

Without delay, Miryam set out and hurried to the town in the hill country of Y'hudah where Z'khar'ah lived, entered his house and greeted Elisheva. When Elisheva heard Miryam's greeting, the baby in her womb stirred. Elisheva was filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and spoke up in a loud voice: "How blessed are you among women! And how blessed is the child in your womb!"

Mysteries of the Star of Bethlehem

Dr. David R. Reagan

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him." — Matthew 2:1-2

The star of Bethlehem has always intrigued people. What was it? Could it have been a comet or a meteor or a super-nova? What about a special alignment of planets?

Various Theories

The longevity of the star rules out a comet or a meteor. The star had to appear each night for several months in order to lead the magi all the way from Persia in the Far East. The possibility of a super-nova or a planetary alignment is ruled out by the fact that the star constantly moved, leading the magi first to Jerusalem and then to Bethlehem where the star hovered over the house where Mary and Joseph had moved to with the Christ Child (Matthew 2:9-11).

A Supernatural Alternative

The renowned Messianic Jewish scholar, Alfred Edersheim, has proposed another solution to the mystery. He points out that the Greek word translated "star" really means "radiance." The "star" could therefore have been what the Jews called the "Shekinah" — that is, a physical manifestation of the glory of God in the form of a supernatural radiance.

The Jews experienced such a phenomenon in the wilderness of Sinai when for 40 years they were led about by a pillar of cloud in the day that became a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22). When the radiant cloud moved, they moved. When the cloud hovered, they pitched their tents and settled down (Numbers 9:15-23).

This Shekinah later resided in the Holy of Holies after the Temple of Solomon was built (2 Chronicles 7:1-3). Ezekiel describes how the Shekinah departed from the Temple in stages before God allowed the Temple to be destroyed by the Babylonians. First, the Shekinah moved from the Holy of Holies to the



threshold of the Temple (Ezekiel 9:3). Then "the glory of the Lord" moved from the threshold to the Eastern Gate (Ezekiel 10:18-19). Finally, the Lord's presence moved to the Mount of Olives where it "stood over the mountain" before departing the city (Ezekiel 11:23).

The Shekinah is mentioned in the New Testament as being present at the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:9), at His transfiguration (Matthew 17:5), and at His ascension (Acts 1:9).

Considering the radiant and maneuverable qualities of the Shekinah that are demonstrated in these scriptures, I think it is very likely that the "star" which led the magi was really the Shekinah glory of God.

The Attraction of the Star

Another mystery associated with the Bible's account of the magi is why did these men "from the east" follow the heavenly radiance?

Their very title gives us a clue. Magi is a Persian term for a priestly caste of wise men who specialized in astrology, medicine, and natural science. The ancient historian Herodotus says they interpreted dreams and omens and claimed to have the gift of prophecy. Such men would naturally have been interested in an unusual heavenly radiance.

It is also very likely that they would have been familiar with the writings of Daniel who gained great renown as a wise man and interpreter of dreams in the Persian court of Nebuchadnezzar. If so, they would have known his prophecy of "the seventy weeks of years" which is recorded in Daniel 9:24-27.

This remarkable prophecy established the general time period of the Messiah's coming by indicating it would be 483 years after a Persian ruler issued an edict to rebuild Jerusalem. The magi had probably been counting down the years since the Jews had been sent back from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem, and they thus knew the general time period when the Messiah would be born.



Because of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, the magi would also have had access to the writings of Moses (the Torah), and from those writings, they may have come across the Messianic prophecy of Balaam that "a star shall come forth from Jacob" (Numbers 24:17).

The Inclusion of the Gentiles

The final mystery is why God would open the eyes of a group of Gentile mystics and draw them to the Christ Child.

Undoubtedly it was for the purpose of symbolizing the universal importance of the birth, to emphasize that although salvation comes from the Jews (John 4:22), it is intended for all peoples.

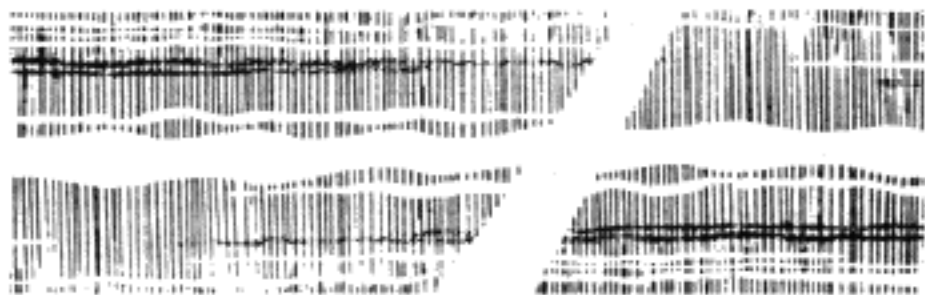
That was certainly the message of the angels who proclaimed to the Bethlehem shepherds that their good news of the birth of a Savior was for "all the people" (Luke 2:10-11).

This point was affirmed and emphasized forty days later when Mary and Joseph took their son to the Temple "to present Him to the Lord" (Luke 2:22). As they entered the Temple, a prophet of God by the name of Simeon took the Christ Child into his arms, blessed God, and then announced:

My eyes have seen Your salvation
Which You have prepared in the
presence of all peoples,
A light of salvation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel.
— Luke 2:30-32

During this Christmas season as you think about the star of Bethlehem that pointed Mankind to the First Coming of the Messiah, keep in mind that Jesus will soon return as "the bright and morning star" (Revelation 22:16). ✚

The Event That Changed The World



"She brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." LUKE 2:7



When Was Jesus Born?

According to Luke 1:24-26, Mary conceived Jesus in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy with John the Baptist. This means that Jesus was born 15 months after the angel Gabriel appeared to Elizabeth's husband, Zacharias, and informed him that his wife would bear a child.

According to Luke 1:5, Zacharias was a priest of the division of Abijah. Luke 1:8 says that Gabriel appeared to Zacharias while he was serving as a priest in the Temple.

We know from the Talmud and other sources that the division of Abijah served as priests during the second half of the fourth month of the Jewish religious calendar — which would have put it in late June (the Jewish religious calendar begins in March with Passover).

Fifteen months later would place the birth of Jesus in the seventh month of the Jewish calendar. That would be in the fall of the year, in either late September or early October. His conception, not His birth, would have occurred in December of the previous year.

The seventh month of the Jewish calendar is the month of the Feast of Tabernacles. John 1:14, speaking of Jesus as the Word, says: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." The word "dwelt" that is used here is the Greek word "skeno" which literally means "to tabernacle"!

So, when God came to earth to tabernacle among Men it appears that He timed His arrival in the Bethlehem manger to coincide with the Feast of Tabernacles. That was only appropriate, for the Feast of Tabernacles is the most joyous of all the Jewish feasts. It is, in fact, their feast of thanksgiving.

The total meaning of that feast will not be fulfilled until the Lord returns again to tabernacle among Men for a thousand years while He reigns over the earth from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. Isn't the Word of God marvelous? ✚

The Forgotten Promises of Christmas

Dr. David R. Reagan

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus this year during the Christmas season, let's remember the promises that were made to Mary when she was visited by the Angel Gabriel:

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and
bear a son,
And you shall call His name Jesus.
He will be great, and will be called the Son
of the Most High;
And the Lord God will give to Him the throne
of His father, David,
And He will reign over the house of Jacob
forever;
And of His kingdom there will be no end.

— Luke 1:31-33

Seven Glorious Promises

This magnificent statement contains seven promises. Four of them relate to the First Advent of the Lord, and they have thus all been fulfilled. Mary did conceive and bear a son. His name was called Jesus. He was great, and He was called the Son of God.

The last three promises which Gabriel made to Mary have not been fulfilled. They relate to the Second Coming of Jesus:

- 1) He will be given the throne of David.
- 2) He will reign over the house of Jacob.
- 3) There will be no end to His kingdom.

I call these three promises the “forgotten promises” of Christmas because they are not taught by most churches in Christendom today. That's because most churches take the position that Jesus will never return to this earth to reign. This is called the Amillennial viewpoint.

Promises Spiritualized

The Amillennial view is based upon the supposition that the Bible does not mean what it says. To substantiate the viewpoint, its proponents are forced to spiritualize Scripture.

Thus, in their interpretation of the passage quoted at the beginning of this article from Luke, they convert the throne of David into the throne of God and the house of Jacob becomes the Church. They then conclude that the promises have been fulfilled in the current reign of Jesus from His father's throne over His Church.

The Throne of David

There is no doubt that Jesus is currently reigning from His father's throne over His kingdom, the Church. But to identify that reign with the one promised to Mary takes a great leap of imagination.

The “throne of David” is not the throne of God. The throne

“He Shall Reign Forever And Ever”



of God is in Heaven. The throne of David is in Jerusalem (Psalm 122:5).

Jesus Himself clearly differentiates between the throne of God and His own throne in Revelation 3:21. In that verse, Jesus says that He will one day allow believers to sit with Him on His throne just as His Father has allowed Him to share His throne.

Jesus is not on the throne of David today. He is sitting at the right hand of His Father, on His Father's throne. He will occupy the throne of David when He returns to earth to reign from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (Isaiah 24:21-23).

The House of Jacob

The “house of Jacob” is not the Church. This is an Old Testament term for the children of Israel (Exodus 19:3). The Church is never referred to in Scripture as the house of Jacob.

The Bible teaches that a remnant of the Jews will one day accept Jesus as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10 and Romans 9:27). This will occur at the end of seven years of terrible suffering called the Tribulation, or “the time of Jacob's trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7).

When Jesus returns at the end of that time of suffering, the Jewish remnant will be gathered to the land of Israel and will be made the foremost nation in the world (Ezekiel 37:11-28 and Zechariah 8:22-23). Jesus will then rule over the house of Jacob.

The Eternal Kingdom

The current Church kingdom is not an everlasting kingdom. The Church Age kingdom will end with the Rapture of the Church.

The Church kingdom will be followed by the Millennial kingdom when Jesus will reign over all the earth from Mt. Zion

in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-4). That kingdom will last one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-7).

The final, Eternal kingdom of Christ will be established on a new, perfected earth (1 Corinthians 15:24 and Revelation 21:1-8).

Believing God's Word

Why can't we accept the promises made to Mary to mean what they say? The first four meant exactly what they said. Why must the last three be spiritualized? The only reason for spiritualizing them is to force them to conform to some preconceived doctrine.

I believe God knows how to communicate. If God had intended to promise Mary that her Son would reign from Heaven over the Church forever, He would have said so. Instead, He reaffirmed to her the promise He had made many times through the Old Testament prophets that His Son would reign from David's throne in Jerusalem over Israel and that He would be given a kingdom that would last forever (Isaiah 9:6-7 and Ezekiel 37:21-28).

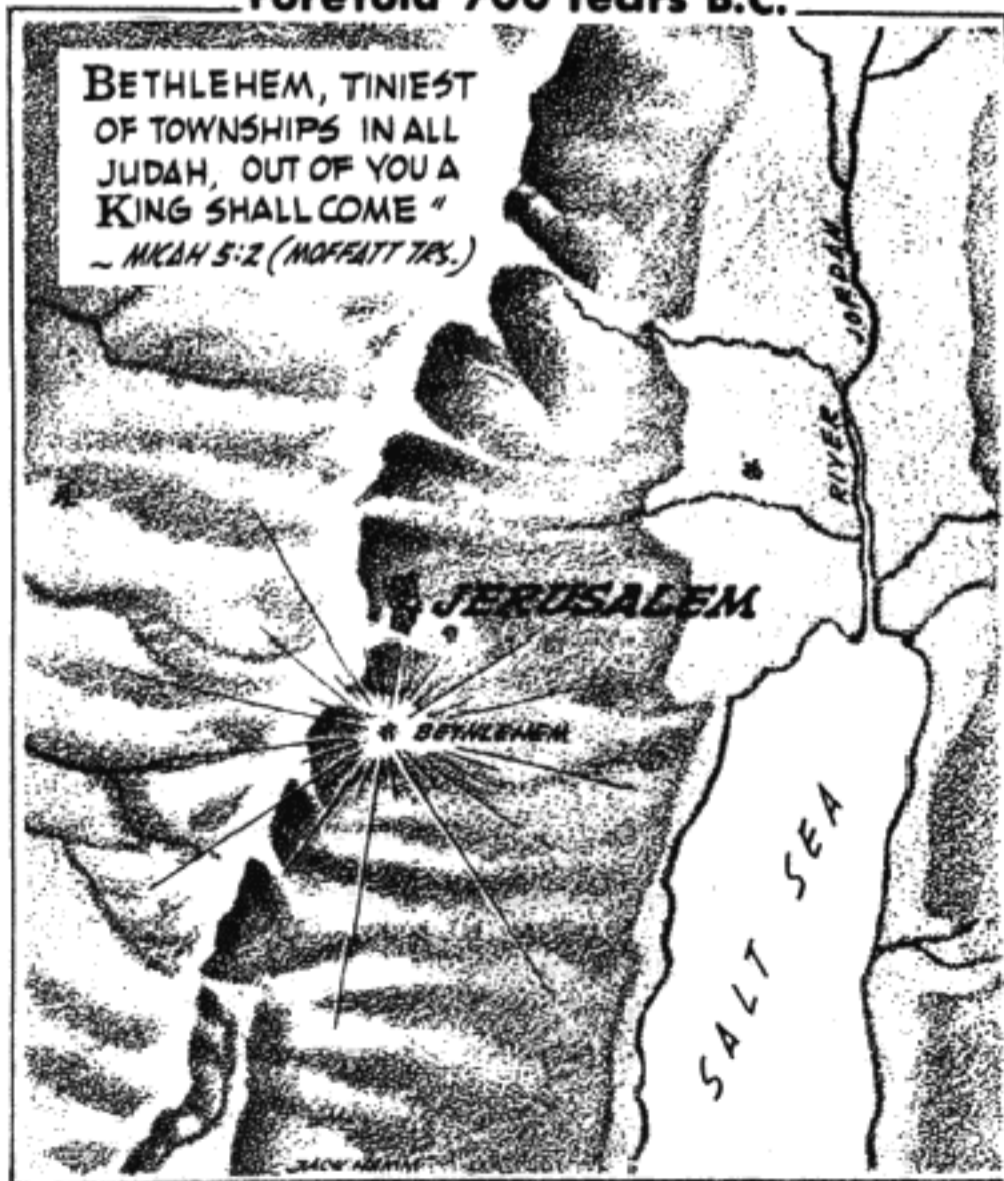
If the promises God made to the Jews did not mean what they said, then how can we be sure that His promises to the Church mean what they say? I believe God means what He says.

A Christmas Hope

During this Christmas season I am going to praise God for sending His Son to die for my sins.

I am also going to pray that God will soon send His Son again to fulfill the "forgotten promises" which Gabriel made to Mary. I thank God that He never forgets a promise. ✚

Foretold 700 Years B.C.



Prophetic Facts about the Nativity

A total of 18 Bible prophecies were fulfilled at the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

Seven of these related to His lineage. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Hebrew prophets had prophesied that the Messiah would be:

- From the Shemite branch of humanity (Genesis 9:26).
- Through Abraham (Genesis 12:3).
- Through Abraham's son, Isaac (Genesis 17:21).
- Through Isaac's son, Jacob (Genesis 28:14).
- Through the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:8).
- Through the family of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1).
- Through the house of David (Jeremiah 23:5)

This genealogical address of the Messiah was fulfilled precisely in Jesus (Matthew 1:1-17).

Notice how this genealogical trail begins broadly and then continually narrows down, focusing finally on a particular household. It's like saying my personal address is the planet Earth, the Western Hemisphere, the North American Continent, the nation of the United States, the state of Texas, the county of Collin, the city of Allen, and the street of Springcrest Court.

This family tree of the Messiah is one of the reasons He had to come before 70 AD because in that year, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, all the genealogical records of the Jewish people were lost. If a Messianic pretender were to present himself today, there would be no way to check his lineage to make certain that he fulfills the prophecies.

Another reason the Messiah had to come before 70 AD relates to the famous prophecy of Daniel called the 70 Weeks of Years (Daniel 9:24-27). This prophecy clearly states that the Messiah will appear and will be killed before the Temple is destroyed.

Other prophecies related to the birth of the Messiah include the place of His birth (Micah 5:2); His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14); His divine name (Isaiah 7:14); the presentation of gifts to Him (Psalm 72:10-11); the massacre of children after His birth (Jeremiah 31:15); His escape into Egypt (Hosea 11:1); His residence in Nazareth (Matthew 2:23); His childhood poverty (Isaiah 53:2); and His Spirit-filled nature from birth (Isaiah 11:1-2).

The fulfillment of all the prophecies in the birth of Jesus is proof positive that He was the promised Messiah. ✚

The Virgin Birth

Its Essentiality to the Faith

Dr. David R. Reagan

There is probably no aspect of the Christian faith that has been subjected to more abuse than the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus.

The world, of course, laughs at the concept. But, tragically, so do many professing Christians. I think it would be safe to say that most liberal Christian spokesmen, representing the mainline denominations, would reject the idea of the virgin birth as nothing more than a crude attempt by ignorant First Century disciples to attribute deity to Jesus.

Central or Peripheral?

Is the virgin birth central to the Christian faith, or is it only a peripheral issue that should be relegated to the realm of opinion?

I believe it is absolutely essential to the faith, for it attests to the identity of Jesus — namely, that He was God in the flesh.

Make no mistake about it — if Jesus was not God, then His sacrifice for our sins was meaningless. No imperfect man could have died for our sins, because his death would not have appeased our Creator's demand for justice. Our sin bearer had to be a perfect man, and thus he had to be divine.

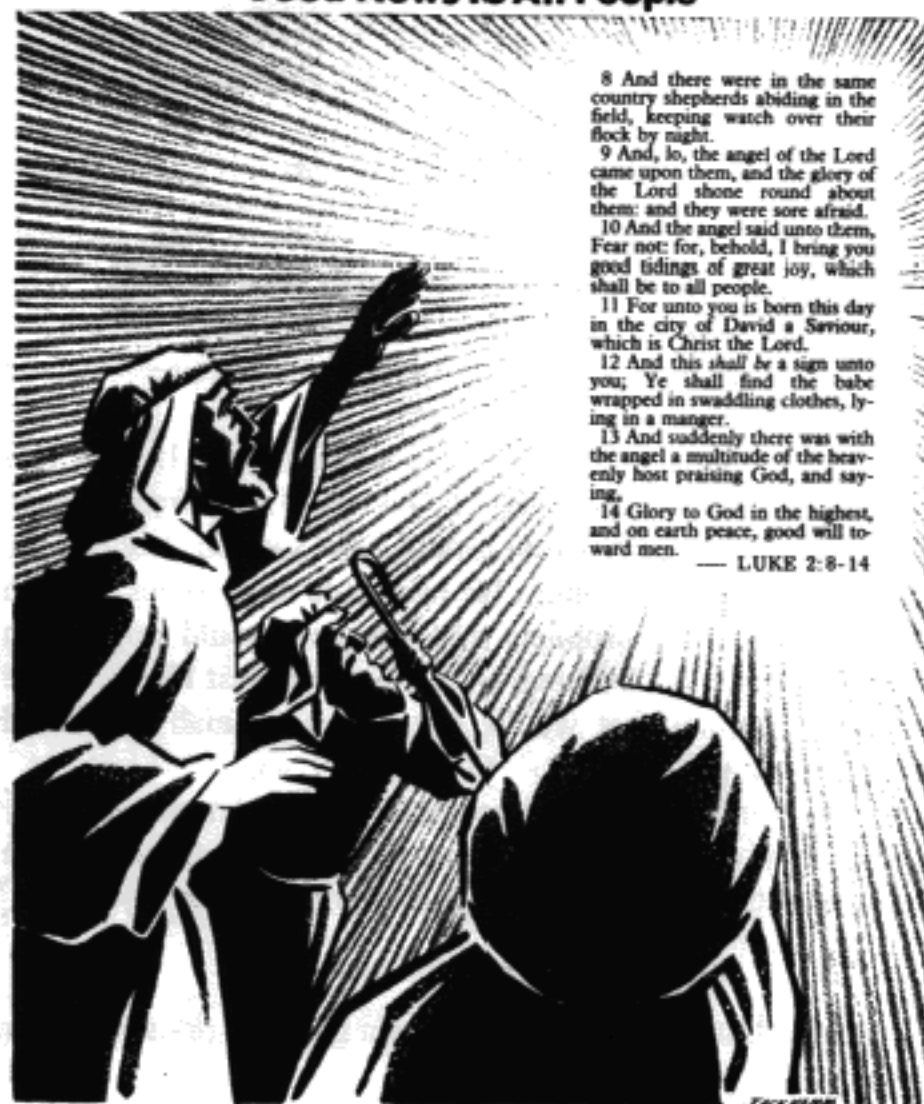
The Hebrew prophets pointed to the divinity of the Messiah. Isaiah said He would be "Immanuel," meaning "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14). Isaiah also said the Messiah would be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Micah stated that the Messiah would be one who had existed "from the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2).

If Jesus was the Messiah, as He claimed to be (Mark 14:61-64 and John 4:25-26), then He had to be God in the flesh. That requires a miraculous conception, because all people born of human parents are born with a fallen sin nature (Psalm 51:5 and Ephesians 2:3). To deny the virgin birth is to deny the deity of Jesus.

A Gift from Heaven



Good News To All People



8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

— LUKE 2:8-14

Satan's Attack

Satan hates the doctrine of the virgin birth because it clearly points to the divinity of Jesus. Satan has thus done everything he can to undermine the doctrine's validity.

Satan's most effective attack has been to raise up scoffers and mockers at the very center of Christianity — in the pulpit. The usual approach is to ridicule the nativity story as the product of the over active imaginations of ignorant disciples.

The Lord obviously anticipated this attack on His Word, for the Holy Spirit motivated a very special man to give us most of the details regarding the virgin birth. That man was Luke, who just "happened" to be a medical doctor! (See Colossians 4:14.) Isn't that neat?

Think of it, the Bible's leading advocate of the virgin birth was a highly educated man who fully understood the biological aspects of conception and birth. He was the person who would have been the most skeptical regarding any "legend" of a virgin birth.

Important too is the fact that the virgin birth of the Messiah was prophesied by the Hebrew prophets. This fact discounts the idea that the virgin birth was a johnny-come-lately idea conjured up by a bunch of illiterate and superstitious shepherds.

The Concept in Prophecy

The first mention of the concept in prophecy is found in Genesis 3:15. In this verse, God tells Satan that the redemption of Mankind will come through one who will be born of "the seed of woman."

Isaiah makes the same point in Isaiah 7:14 where he states the Messiah will be born of a "virgin." It is true that the Hebrew word used by Isaiah can also be translated "maiden." But when

a group of rabbis translated this verse into Greek in what is known as the Septuagint Version of the Hebrew Scriptures (about 285 BC), they used a Greek word that can only mean "virgin." Likewise, when Matthew quoted this verse in his Gospel (Matthew 1:23) and applied it to Jesus, he used the same Greek word that can only be translated "virgin."

A third prophecy is found in Jeremiah 31:22: "The Lord has created a new thing in the earth — a woman will encompass a man." This is a rather enigmatic prophecy, but the important thing about it is that Jewish rabbis over the centuries have interpreted it to mean that the Messiah will have a miraculous origin. As one rabbi put it, the conception of the Messiah will be "like the dew of the Lord upon a woman."

The Biblical Evidence

The best evidence of the virgin birth is to be found in the Scripture record.

Consider first of all the immediate reaction of Mary to Gabriel's announcement that she would conceive a son whose name would be Jesus (Luke 1:31). Mary responded: "How can this be since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34). Mary may have been a very young woman (probably about 14 to 15 years old), but she knew how a baby was conceived, and she therefore knew it was not possible for her to have a child. That's why Gabriel responded by declaring, "Nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

Further evidence of Mary's innocence is to be found in the first action she took after she became pregnant (Luke 1:39-40). She "went with haste" to share the news with some relatives! Now, how many unwed pregnant girls have you ever seen behave in that manner? They are usually so overcome with guilt and shame that they want to hide. They certainly don't want to share the news with relatives!

Even more significant is the kind of relatives Mary selected. The head of the household was a priest by the name of Zacharias (Luke 1:5). Keep in mind that although Mary was only betrothed to Joseph and had not yet consummated the marriage, she was considered married to him. If she became pregnant during the betrothal period, she was considered an adulteress and was thus subject to stoning or divorce. In other words, she faced death or humiliation. Yet, she ran to a priestly family to share the news of her pregnancy. If she had been guilty of adultery, it would have been the responsibility of Zacharias as a priest to report her. This evidently did not concern Mary because she went in innocence.

Further evidence of Mary's innocence is found in the description of her arrival at the house of Zacharias. His wife, Elizabeth, who was six months pregnant with John the Baptist, felt the baby leap in her womb with joy when Mary entered the house! (See Luke 1:41 and 44.) Also, Elizabeth was "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:41) and immediately spoke a supernatural word of knowledge. She cried out: "Blessed among women are you, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" (Luke 1:42). She then declared Mary to be "the mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43).

The final bit of evidence of Mary's innocence is presented by Luke in verses 45 through 55. He records a glorious song which Mary sang to the Lord in the presence of Elizabeth. It begins with the words, "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." How many unwed pregnant girls have you ever heard sing a song like that?

A Call to Faith

The evidence of the virgin birth which Dr. Luke presents is overwhelming. Yet, it does not prove the virgin birth. The virgin birth, like the resurrection of Jesus, must be accepted ultimately by faith — but not by blind faith. It is faith based upon factual evidence and the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

The world sneers and screams, "It is impossible!" The Angel Gabriel said to Mary, "With God nothing is impossible!"

What the world so desperately needs today is the simple child like faith of Mary.

Another thing all of us so desperately need is the willingness of Mary to yield her life to the Lord's will, regardless of the circumstances. Remember Mary's brave words: "Behold, I am the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Mary spoke those words knowing that she could likely suffer execution or public humiliation.

It is no wonder that the Word says Mary will be called "blessed" by all generations (Luke 1:48).

The Significance

One thing is certain. The virgin birth is not irrelevant. It is essential to the deity of Jesus. And the deity of Jesus is essential, in turn, if His death had any meaning at all. Paul ties it all together in Galatians 4:4-5: "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

To deny the virgin birth is to deny the deity of Jesus, for without the virgin birth Jesus is just another man born with the flawed sin nature inherited by all of us from Adam. And if Jesus is just a man, then we have no hope whatsoever. ❖



War at home

Shaken nation awaits tally from Pentagon, Trade Center attacks; Bush vows to track down terrorists and 'bring them to justice'

The Attack on America

Observations by Dr. David R. Reagan

Two questions began to pour into our office via email and telephone on the day that the horrific attack on America occurred. Why did the attack happen — what motivated it? And why would God allow such incredible carnage?

I believe there are three keys to understanding why the attack occurred:

1. It relates to America's support of Israel.
2. It relates to the inherent nature of Islam.
3. It relates to America's rebellion against God.

Support of Israel

The most obvious answer to why America would be attacked by Islamic terrorists is our support of the nation of Israel, and that certainly is an important factor. Muslims hate the Jews with a passion, and their loudly proclaimed goal is to exterminate the nation of Israel, or, as they have so often put it, "to make the Mediterranean run red with the blood of the Jews."

The Muslims feel obligated to seek this goal of annihilation because of the teachings of their holy book, the Koran. Their scriptures tell them that they have a responsibility to conquer the world for their god, Allah. And they are further taught that this responsibility is particularly ur-

gent with regard to any territory that has been won for Allah and subsequently lost. That principle applies to Israel, which for many years was controlled by the Islamic Turkish Empire as the land of Palestine.

Since the United States has been the only nation willing to stand behind Israel, the Muslims believe that if they can make that commitment painful enough for us, we will abandon Israel. They may be right. I have already heard many people on call-in shows on the radio state that we need "to cut Israel loose" so that the terrorists will stop targeting us.

The Nature of Islam

But this idea ignores a deeper source of the hatred that the Muslims have toward the United States. The fact of the matter is that if Israel were to disappear from the world scene tomorrow, the Muslim world would still hate America with a passion.

That's because Islam is a cultural religion whose purpose is to impose by force, if necessary, a Seventh Century Arabic culture on the entire world. The truth is that Islam is a virulent form of cultural imperialism. This is very difficult for Westerners to comprehend. For example, Christianity is "supra-cultural" in the sense that it allows people to live, dress, and eat in accordance with the culture in which they exist. Not so





with Islam. Islam regulates every aspect of life to the point that culture, religion, and politics are inseparable. There is no separation of the mosque and state in Islamic nations.

There is not one Islamic nation where democracy exists. Freedom of religion is non-existent in the Islamic world. No Islamic state will allow the open proclamation of the Gospel. Jews are anathema.

Islam by its very nature is incompatible with modern life and democracy. The United States is viewed as the "Great Satan" because we lead the world in technology and we are the major advocate of democratic principles. We are considered to be the most important threat to the purity of Islam.

We are also hated because of our power. Islam has always been a religion of the sword. The very word, Islam, means "submission." Every place where Islam prevails, the religion has been imposed by military conquest. It is still the goal of Islam to conquer the world, and the United States is viewed as the major obstacle to that goal.

Do not be deceived by all the media talk about Islamic fundamentalists being unrepresentative of true Islam. The Koran not only condones violence against unbelievers, it actually commands it: "Fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem of war" (Sura 9:5). As for those who resist conversion to Islam, the Koran issues the following command: "Their punishment is . . . execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from the opposite sides, or exile from the land" (Sura 5:33).

Do not be deceived by all the assertions of liberal, apostate Christian leaders who claim that the Islamic peoples are our "brothers and sisters in the Lord" because they worship the same God that Christians do. Allah is not the God of the Bible. Allah is an unknowable, aloof, impersonal, and capricious god who saves or condemns people on the basis of their works. The Koran states that Jews are people "whom Allah has cursed" (Sura 4:52). The Trinity is specifically denied (Sura 5:73-75) and Jesus is dismissed as nothing more than "an apostle of Allah" (Sura

4:171).

In short, Islam is a demonic religion that is the very antithesis of Christianity.

America's Rebellion

The third reason the attacks occurred relates to what has been happening inside America since the 1960's. As I have often said, and as I tried to document in my recent book, *Living for Christ in the End Times*, the United States is a nation in rebellion against God.

We are in the process of jettisoning our Christian heritage. Christian leaders are denying the fundamentals of the faith. Political leaders have been determined to convert us into a secular society. Americans have responded by embracing a hedonistic lifestyle. In the words of Judge Robert H. Bork, ever since the mid-20th Century, we have been "slouching towards Gomorrah." In the process, we have become the moral polluter of planet earth through the exportation of our immoral and violent television programs and movies.

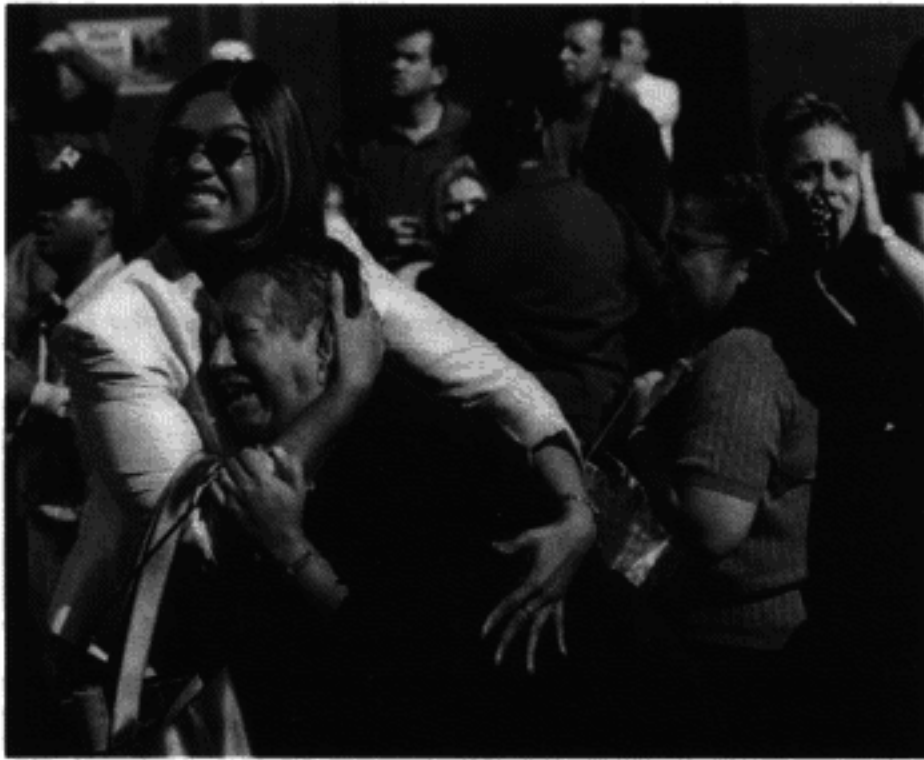
How does all this relate to why the attacks of September 11 took place? The point is that the attacks were permitted by God as a judgment on the United States for the sins of our nation, for our rebellion against God and His Word.

I therefore see the attacks as a spiritual wake-up call from the Lord. Think about it for a moment — God allowed the symbols of American pride to be destroyed, the symbols of both wealth and power: the Trade Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

We must face up to the unpleasant reality that we are a nation in rebellion against God. And we must realize that our rebellion is particularly dangerous. The reason is that we have been blessed more abundantly with freedom, prosperity, and spiritual riches than any other nation in history. Why is this so significant? Because the Word of God teaches that those to whom much is given, much is expected (Luke 12:47-48). That means we are going to be held to a higher level of accountability than other nations. And it means our rebellion is going to be judged more harshly.

As we began turning our back on God during the 20th





Century, God started placing judgments upon us to call us to repentance. The Vietnam War was a judgment. Additional judgments included the drug epidemic, the homosexual scourge, the AIDS plague, the glut of pornography, and the rebellion of young people.

The first chapter of Romans teaches that God pours out His wrath on a rebellious nation by stepping back, lowering His hedge of protection, and allowing evil to multiply. It's as if He were saying, "If you really want to live in a fouled nest, then I will let you." According to Romans 1, when He first steps back, a sexual revolution occurs (Romans 1:24-25). That happened in the United States in the 1960's.

If the society persists in its rebellion, then God will take another step back and lower His hedge of protection even more.

The result will be a plague of homosexuality (Romans 1:26-27). The United States has been experiencing this judgment since the 1970's. If the society continues its rebellion, God will take a third step back and deliver the nation to a "depraved mind" (Romans 1:28-31). This is the point at which the Lord moves the nation from judgment to destruction. We are at that point.

We have dug in our heels and set our jaw against God. We have been shaking our fist at Him, saying, "Who are You to try to tell us what to do?" We have thumbed our nose at the very One who has blessed us beyond anything we have ever deserved.

So, I believe that God allowed the attacks of September 11, 2001 in order to get our attention — to call our nation to repentance before He is forced by His character to deliver us from judgment to destruction. "The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished" (Nahum 1:3).

God and Evil

Now, I know that many Christians have great difficulty with the idea that God could allow such horror to take place. We want

to just flippantly write it all off as "the work of Satan."

The interesting thing is that the Bible has no such difficulty. In the Bible, all calamities are ascribed to God, whether they be natural disasters or acts of war. That's because God is sovereign. He is in control. Nothing can happen without His permission. That's why when Satan wanted to touch Job, he first had to ask God's permission (Job 1:6-12).

Keep in mind that God has a perfect will and a permissive will. For example, the Bible states point blank that God does not wish that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). In other words, it is God's perfect will that all people be saved. But in His permissive will, God allows people to use their free will to reject Him and thus be lost.

God has a perfect will for history. It will result in the triumph of Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords, ruling over all the nations of the world, with the world flooded with peace, righteousness, and justice. As God moves toward the accomplishment of that goal, He must deal with the evil of Satan and Man.

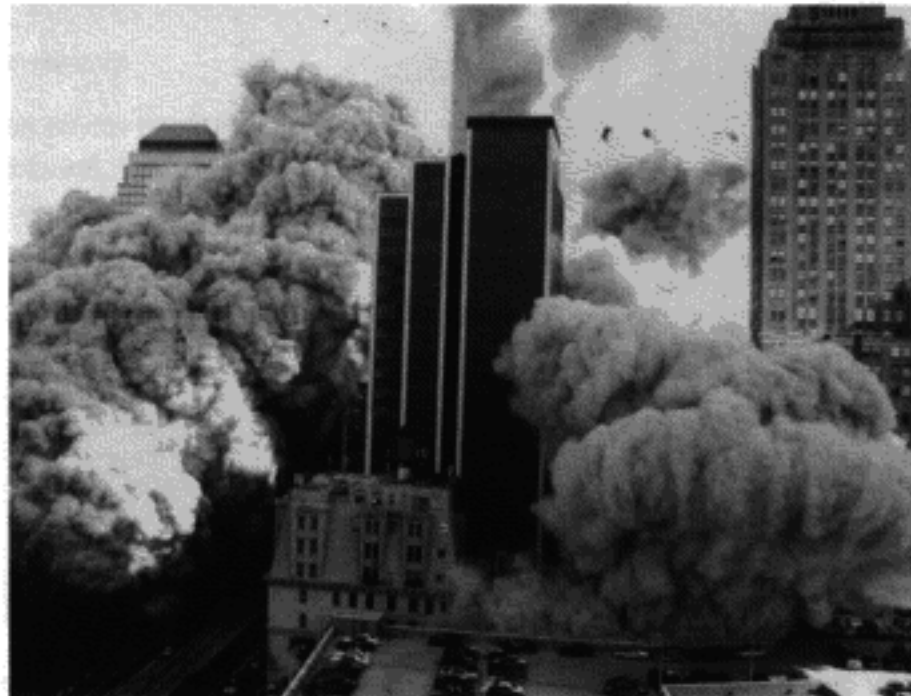
Thankfully, *God has the wisdom and power to orchestrate all the evil of both Satan and Man to the triumph of Jesus.*

A Biblical Example

The Bible is full of examples of this fundamental truth. One that comes to mind is found in the book of Habakkuk. Before the time of Habakkuk, the Jews had been divided into two nations. The southern nation of Judah, consisting of two tribes, was faithful to the Lord, and God blessed that nation with the presence of His Shekinah Glory in their Temple in Jerusalem. The northern nation of Israel, consisting of ten tribes, was a nation that had been in rebellion against God since its establishment. The nation wallowed in idolatry and refused to repent, so God finally sent the Assyrians to

conquer it.

A hundred years later, the southern nation of Judah was following in the steps of its northern sister. The people of Judah



had become engulfed in pride and had turned their backs on God. The Lord told Habakkuk to call the people of Judah to repentance or else suffer His wrath. Habakkuk did as the Lord directed, and his message was despised. He was ridiculed and rebuked. Finally, Habakkuk cried out to God, asking Him to validate the prophet's message by sending judgments upon the nation. The Lord astounded him by revealing that He was about to send the Chaldeans to destroy his nation.

Habakkuk wanted some wrath from God to fall on his nation, but he wanted just a little. The idea that God was about to send the most evil nation in the world to destroy Judah was beyond his comprehension. He responded by asking the Lord a very profound question: "How can You who are holy, just and righteous punish those who are evil with those who are more evil?" The Lord responded by saying, "The righteous shall live by faith."

It was a tough answer. The Lord was in effect saying, "Who are you to question Me? Your duty is to trust Me, not to question Me."

As Habakkuk wrestled with this difficult answer, the Lord helped him by giving him a very dramatic vision of the Second Coming of the Messiah, showing Habakkuk that when that event occurs, the Messiah will pour out the wrath of God on all the nations of the world. Reassured with God's eternal perspective,



Habakkuk responded by singing a great song of tough faith in which he asserted that even if the Lord sent the army and destroyed his nation, he would "exult in the Lord [and] . . . rejoice in the God of my salvation [for] the Lord God is my strength" (Habakkuk 3:18-19).

Well, God did send the army. The city of Jerusalem was destroyed. The sacred Temple was burned. The nation of Judah was destroyed. The Jewish people were taken into exile. But today, 2,500 years later, the Jewish people have been regathered from the four corners of the earth and re-established in their land. The Chaldeans are in the dustbin of history. God used an evil nation, the Chaldeans, to discipline the Jews, and then He raised up the Medo-Persian Empire to demolish the Chaldeans.

Historical Examples

History is also full of examples of God working through the evil schemes of Satan and Man to accomplish His purposes. Take World War I as an example. Satan must have thought he had accomplished one of his greatest successes when he maneuvered the armies of the world into the mass slaughter that took place at the beginning of the 20th Century on the battlefields of Europe. Yet God worked through that evil to implement His end time program for the return of His Son.

The point is that World War I resulted in the liberation of the land of Palestine from 400 years of Turkish rule. The land was handed over to the British as a League of Nations Mandate, and the British immediately announced that their intention was to turn it into a homeland for the Jewish people. This must have panicked Satan because he knows Bible prophecy, and he therefore knows that the Bible says the Messiah will return when the Jews have been regathered to their land and are once again in control of Jerusalem (Zechariah 12). So, Satan responded by orchestrating World War II and the Nazi Holocaust. His intention was to annihilate the Jews so that God could not fulfill His promise to regather them. But God preserved the Jews through the war, and in the process He motivated them to return to their homeland. They came out of the Holocaust saying, "Never again! Never again will we submit ourselves to a Hitler. We will have our own land and our own state."

God worked through the evil of World War I to prepare the land for the people. In like manner, He worked through the evil of World War II to prepare the people for the land. Satan has to

be the most frustrated character on planet earth. No matter what he throws at God, the Lord takes it and turns it around for good.

The Source of Evil

Now, let me make one thing very clear: *God is not the source of evil.* Evil originates from the free will of Satan and Man when they use that free will to rebel against God.

But God allows evil to succeed at times for a multiplicity of reasons, some known only to Him. The reasons that we can discern include the following: to test us, to discipline us, and to sanctify us.

Sometimes God allows evil to come into our lives to test us — not to determine how strong we are (He already knows), but to show us how weak we are so that we will lean on Him.

At other times, God allows us to suffer because He desires to discipline us for drifting out of His will. The Bible says God disciplines those whom He loves (Hebrews 12:5).

Suffering is also essential to sanctification — to being shaped more fully into the image of Jesus. For example, how could you ever show compassion toward a sick person if you have never been ill?

Abe Lincoln understood these principles about God and evil. In the midst of the Civil War he issued a remarkable proclamation in which he called all Americans to go to their churches and synagogues and ask the Lord to forgive them and our nation of our sins. He said this was essential because the Civil War was a judgment of God upon the nation for its sins.

The Last Sneak Attack

To demonstrate again how God can work through evil acts to accomplish good, consider the tragedy of Pearl Harbor. Before that attack, public opinion polls in the United States showed that 75 to 80 percent of Americans opposed American entry into the war in Europe. Americans were overwhelmingly isolationist. Pearl Harbor changed all that in a matter of minutes. It catapulted us into the war and sealed the fate of the Nazis. A terrible tragedy worked for good.

Our second Pearl Harbor of September 11, 2001, is a call for national repentance. It is a call for us to get on our knees and repent of our sins — to repent of our materialism, our hedonism, our idolatry, our pride, and our slaughter of more than 43 million babies since 1973.

God loves us. He has richly blessed us. He has worked through us to spread the Gospel all over the world. He does not want to deliver us from judgment to destruction. But He will do so, just as He has done with other rebellious nations, if we do not repent. In fact, He *must* do so because His justice, righteousness, and holiness demand it.

“The greatest threat to our nation’s security is not terrorism from without, but sin from within.”

Dennis Pollock

Coping With The Tragedy

In the midst of all the recent horror, I have been able to keep an eternal perspective and thus a sense of calm and hope because of something that Psalm 2 reveals.

The psalm says that all the nations of the world are in revolt against the Lord and His Anointed One, the Messiah. It says the nations shake their fists at God and say, “Who are You to tell us what we can and cannot do?” It says that the nations are constantly plotting evil, trying to thwart God’s will in history. Needless to say, this is not the part of the psalm that comforts me.

What gives me reassurance is the next section of the psalm. It describes God’s response to the evil of the nations and their leaders. The psalm says God responds by sitting in Heaven and laughing! That’s right, God sits in Heaven and laughs at the evil plots of Satan and Man. Is it because He does not care? Not at all! It is because He has it all under control. The psalm says that God has the nations in “derision.” That means, once again, that He has the wisdom and power to orchestrate all their evil to the triumph of His Son. The psalm also says that God laughs because He has appointed a day of judgment when He will hold all the evil leaders of the world accountable for their actions.

The Centrality of the Cross

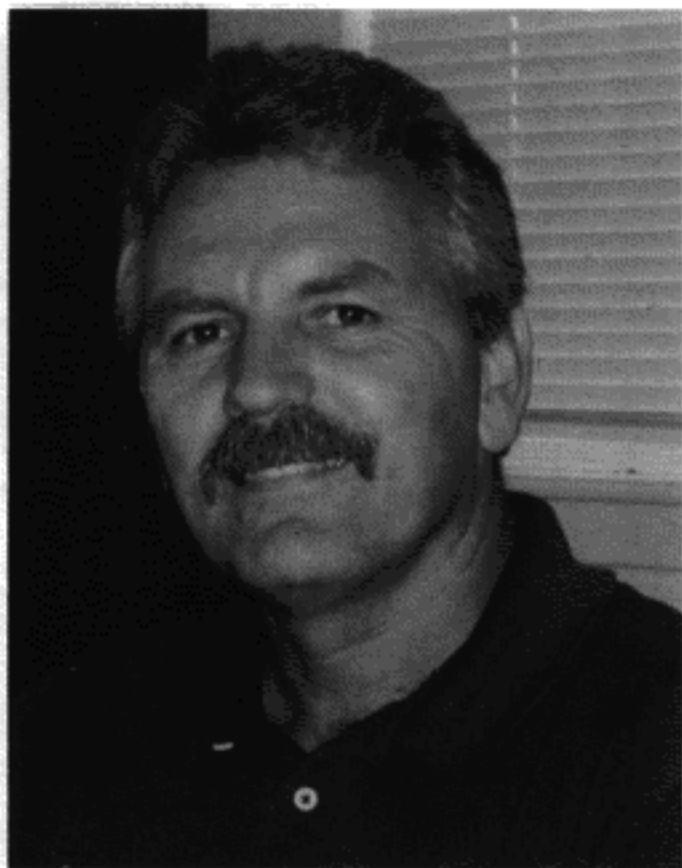
The greatest example of God’s ability to bring good out of evil is to be found in the Cross. When Jesus was nailed to the Cross, Satan thought he had gained his greatest success. Psalm 22 pictures Satan and his demonic hordes dancing around the Cross in glee. Since that psalm is prophetic, I’m sure that must have happened, and I’m certain that Jesus must have witnessed it with His spiritual eyes. But within days Satan was running for cover because God took the most dastardly act of history and turned it into the most glorious through the power of the Resurrection.

As we grieve over all those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, as we pray for our leaders, and as we look toward a very uncertain future, let us remember the Cross and let us lift up Jesus. Our hope is not in riches or military power. Our hope, our only hope, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Maranatha! Come quickly, Lord Jesus. ❖



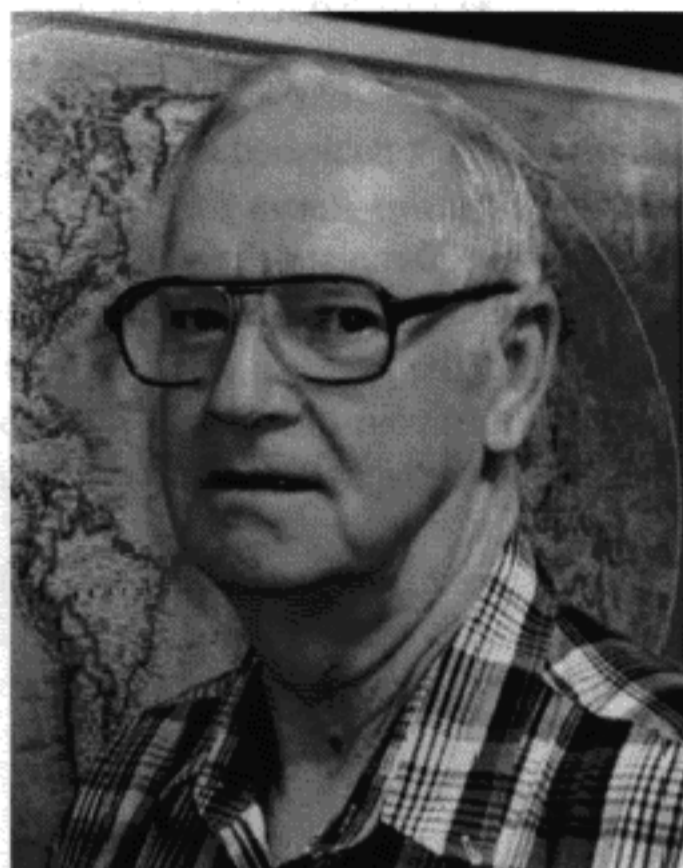
Meet Our Staff Members



Leo Houck

Birth Place & Date: Andrews, Texas in 1953.
Wife's Name & Years Married: Rachel, 13 years.
Names & Ages of Children: Reagan (18) and David (10).
Education: GED and some college.
Lamb & Lion Position: Director of Outreach.
Duties: Mail room manager and general maintenance of property and buildings.
Number of Years on Staff: 5.
Number of Years a Christian: 30.
Church Membership: New Hope Christian Church in Wylie, Texas.
Church Activities: Theme team, drama team, and home group.
Spiritual Gifts: Helps.
Favorite Scriptures: Jeremiah 29:11-14, Philippians 4:4-9, and 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.
Favorite Bible Characters: David, Abraham and Daniel.
Favorite Christian Book: *The Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tozer.
Favorite Christian Hymn: "Amazing Grace."
Favorite Bible Version: New American Standard.
Favorite Movies: "Les Miserables" and "Fiddler on the Roof."
Favorite Novel: *All the King's Men* by Robert Penn Warren.
Favorite Pastime: Family activities, reading, writing, and golf.
Special Note: Leo is Dr. Reagan's son-in-law. He is a very gifted poet.

Meet Our Trustees



Stancil Bynum

Birth Place & Date: Bryan, Texas in 1930.
Wife's Name & Years Married: Alice, 44 years.
Number of Children: 4.
Number of Grandchildren: 8.
Current Residence: Van, Texas.
Education: High School, two years of college, and various courses at technical schools.
Occupation: Retired instrument and electrical technician.
Number of Years a Christian: 44.
Years on Lamb & Lion Board: 21 (founding trustee).
Church Membership: All Nations Church, League City, TX.
Spiritual Gifts: Helps.
Church Activities: Sound system and cassette tapes.
Favorite Scriptures: Psalm 144 and Romans 2:16-17.
Favorite Bible Character: Jeremiah.
Favorite Christian Book: The books of C. S. Lewis.
Favorite Christian Hymn: "Whispering Hope."
Favorite Contemporary Christian Song: "Lord of the Dance."
Favorite Bible Version: The New International Version.
Favorite Pastime: Bible study programs on the computer.
Special Note: Stancil and his wife, Alice, were two of Dr. Reagan's greatest encouragers when he began Lamb & Lion Ministries. They live with their daughter, Becky, who serves as a medical supplies purchaser for the YWAM mercy ships.

New Bible Study Resources from Dennis Pollock

A Devotional Book That Will Draw You Closer to God.

The Ministry has just published a devotional book by Dennis Pollock entitled, *Making Room for Jesus*. It is based upon a special sermon that Dennis delivered to the Lamb & Lion Trustees at their annual Christmas retreat several years ago.

Contained within the pages of this little book is a secret that has the potency to turn your life around. It is not a formula. It is not a gimmick. It is not magic. It offers no guarantee of material wealth.

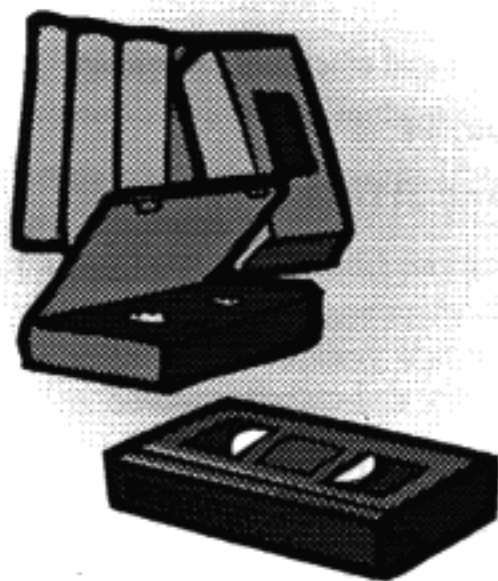
Is this some esoteric doctrine that is mysteriously pulled from between the lines of sacred verse?

No, nothing so deep or mysterious. This secret has to do with the fundamental nature of the Savior of the world. When you truly see it, your walk with Jesus will never be the same.

The book is hardbound with a dust cover. It runs 69 pages in length. The cost is \$5 plus \$2 for mailing. This is an ideal book for Christmas giving. To order, call 1-800-705-8316. Call between 8am and 5pm, Central time, Monday through Friday.

Two Sermons on Video Tape That Will Bless Your Understanding of God.

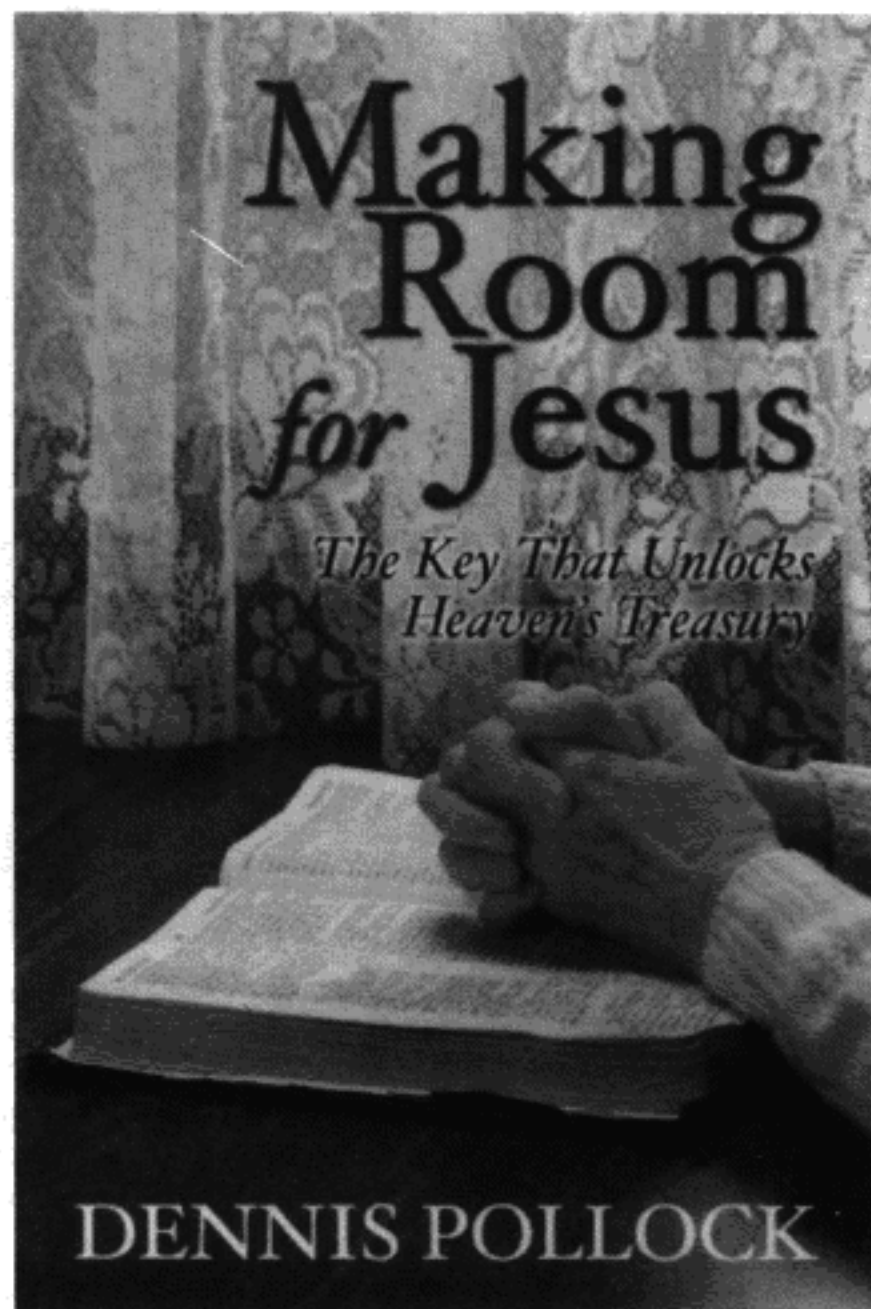
The Ministry has just released a new video program that contains two 45 minute sermons by Dennis Pollock, both delivered before live audiences in our new video studio.



The first sermon on the tape is a very unique one entitled, "**The Titanic and the Last Days.**" It is a creative and imaginative presentation in which Dennis compares the attitude that prevailed about the Titanic to the attitude the Bible says will characterize the world right before the return of Jesus. The parallels will amaze you.

The other sermon on the tape is entitled "**The Sovereignty of God.**" The title sounds very theological, and the content does wrestle with some deep theological questions such as, "Where is God when evil seems to prevail?" But Dennis develops the theme in his usual down-to-earth, easy-to-understand manner, and the result is a sermon that will inform, enlighten and inspire you. This sermon contains Dennis' famous (infamous?) "mad dog story" that will have you laughing uncontrollably.

90 minutes in length. The cost is \$12 plus \$3 for mailing.



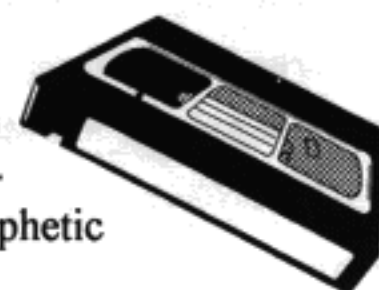
Panel Discussion

Dennis Pollock is also featured in another video program which the Ministry released recently.

It is a panel discussion of Bible prophecy during which the panel members respond to a great variety of questions from a live audience.

The questions and answers cover the signs of the times, the timing of the Rapture, the nature of the Tribulation, the United States in prophecy, and the Millennial reign of Jesus.

Dennis' dry wit sparkles throughout this fascinating discussion of God's Prophetic Word.



80 minutes in length. The cost is \$12 plus \$3 for mailing.

Annual Campaign for the Hands of Luke Ministry

November marks the time for us to launch our yearly fund raising campaign for the Hands of Luke Ministry in Juarez, Mexico (across the border from El Paso).

This wonderful ministry is headed up by a great man of God, Dr. Marco Samaniego. Dr. Marco is a medical doctor who has devoted his life to helping the poor and destitute of his native country of Mexico.

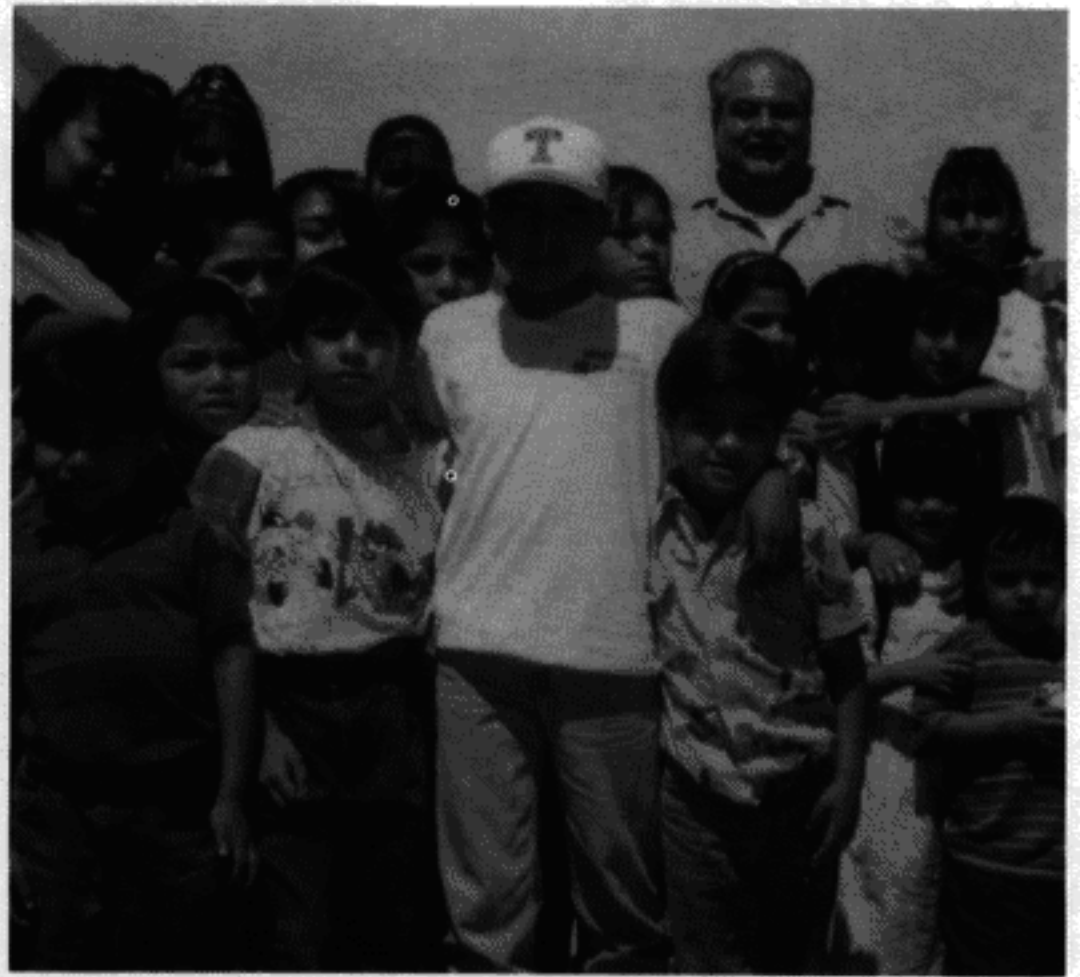
Dr. Marco runs an orphanage in Juarez that houses almost 90 children. His ministry also operates four nutritional centers in outlying areas of Juarez where over 500 children are fed breakfast every day. For many, it is their only meal.

Additionally, the ministry provides aid for homeless families, battered women, and inmates at the state prison.

The ministry also provides a complete range of medical services, including surgery, and all the services are supplied either free of charge or at minimal cost. The services are also supplied in the name of Jesus, and the Gospel is shared with all recipients.

Each year at Thanksgiving, the ministry supplies 20,000 free meals to the people who live on the garbage dumps of Juarez. And at Christmas, the ministry provides meals and gifts to over 10,000 children.

Last year, we raised over \$50,000 for this very worthy ministry. We would like to exceed that this year. Please help us do this by sending a donation marked for "Hands of Luke." You can speed up your donation by making it through a credit card. To do this, call 1-800-705-8316. *Gracias!*



Dr. Marco is shown above with some of the orphans that his ministry cares for. Many of these children have been abandoned to live on the streets of Juarez.

Ministry News

Missions — Dennis Pollock had a very blessed trip to India in early September. He conducted two Bible prophecy conferences for pastors, one in Bangalore and the other in Madurai. He was accompanied by Ronnie Jones, one of the ministry's trustees. A detailed report on this trip will be included in the next issue of this magazine. The conferences were so successful that Dr. Reagan has accepted an invitation from the sponsoring agency — Revival Literature Fellowship — for him and Dennis to return to India next September to conduct similar conferences in New Delhi and Kathmandu. We want to thank all of you who gave so generously to cover the costs of this important missions outreach.

Christmas Gifts — As you think about the Christmas shopping you need to do, please remember the great variety of materials that this ministry has available, including cassette tapes, video tapes, and books. We would like to recommend in particular our new video programs: "A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land," "Israel in Bible Prophecy," "The Middle East Crisis in Biblical Perspective," "Hosea: God's Prophet of Love," "Preaching Prophecy," "A Panel

Discussion of Bible Prophecy," and our newest video containing two sermons by Dennis Pollock. (see the previous page). To order any of these, or to order a catalogue, call our toll free number at 1-800-705-8316. Call between 8am and 5pm, Central time, Monday through Friday.

Schedule — In early January Dr. Reagan is scheduled to conduct a prophecy conference in Destin, Florida at the Destin United Methodist Church (4-5). In February, Dave will be at Paradise Valley Christian Church in Phoenix, Arizona (1-2) and Calvary Christian Church in Winchester, Kentucky (8-10).

Israel — The ministry's next pilgrimage to the Holy Land has been scheduled for the spring of next year. The dates are April 20 through May 1. Dr. Reagan will be leading the group. The itinerary includes two nights in Tel Aviv, two nights in Tiberias (on the Sea of Galilee), and five nights in Jerusalem. For more detailed information, including a brochure, call 1-800-705-8316.

The two most important things you can do for this ministry are to put us on your prayer list and become a Prophecy Partner. To find out about becoming a Prophecy Partner, call 1-800-705-8316. Thank you!

Dr. Reagan's New Book on Revelation

The book of Revelation reveals that when Jesus returns, He will come in both wrath and glory — thus the title of this new book. The subtitle, "Unveiling the Majestic Book of Revelation," is exactly what the book does in a down-to-earth, easy-to-understand manner.

The book is designed to clear away the mystery of Revelation, showing what it means about the future while making it relevant to daily living in the present. It contains many helpful charts and diagrams.

Dr. Reagan provides keys to understanding Revelation and then uses those keys to present a breathtaking overview of the book's message. He also responds to the most frequently asked questions about the book.

Put this book on your Christmas shopping list and purchase copies not only for yourself, but for your pastor and friends. And don't forget to include a copy for your church library.

It sells in the bookstores for \$12. We are offering it for the same price (\$10 plus \$2 for mailing). You can order copies today by calling 1-800-705-8316. Call between 8am and 5pm (Central time), Monday through Friday. ✝



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