

## **E-Herald of the Coming Kingdom**

The time has come, and the Kingdom of God is near.  
Change the way you think and act, and believe the Good News.”  
Mark 1:15 GW

- **WHICH TRUTH :**
- **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION**
- **RACING TO THE FINISH LINE**
- **JESUS, THE SON OF GOD**
- **SALVATION ONLY THROUGH CHRIST**
- **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**
- **FIRM FOUNDATION**

**DEDICATED TO SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S COMING KINGDOM TO BE ESTABLISHED WHEN CHRIST RETURNS**



## Editor's Note

Co-Editors: Kent H. Ross Wally Winner



### U.S. Elections & Dr. Joe's sermon on Nineveh

After our annual Church of God General Conference this past summer, Dr. Joe Martin, head of our college and conference, spoke at a church here in Ohio. His message was on the prophet Jonah.

He made many excellent points in the message, but one of them has left me, first thinking and then praying. One of the many lessons from Jonah is that God can "change" His mind. That may not be a properly theological term, but is somewhat explanatory. God had determined to destroy mighty Nineveh. That was His Plan and His decision . . . yet Jonah's message, his dire warning, evidently fell on receptive ears.

Nineveh repented. Did they all? We can't know how many. Conversely, we can also remind ourselves of the angel's dire warning on Sodom in Lot's story. They couldn't then find 50, or even 45, or 40, or 30, or 20, or 10, as Abraham pleaded with the Lord. In Nineveh's case enough were found who repented, and God rescinded His wrath and spared the city. In Sodom's case not even 10 could be found and Sodom was destroyed by fire from heaven.

That message from Jonah's story caused my thinking about our country and other countries around the world. Because I am an American, my thoughts were focused here. My heart has grown heavy for quite a few years over the descent into immorality evidenced here, not just in movies and television, but also in the lies and the disingenuousness of our government leaders . . . and now with the seeming disinclination to stand with Israel, God's special people.

Because the prophetic picture shows that at the end of time, of this Age, when God send His Son back to this planet, "ALL" nations are to be gathered together against Jerusalem. That certainly seems to indicate the U.S., and perhaps other "western" countries will be on the "wrong side."

That is the final scenario, but perhaps, just perhaps, if enough righteous people beseech the Lord, He may, may . . . withhold His judgment for a time. How long, if He does? We can't know. Maybe 15 years, as in Hezekiah's story.

But it may be if His people, who are called by His name, humble themselves, pray, seek His face and turn from their wicked ways . . . He will hear our prayers and heal our land, or withhold His judgment for a time. Read 2nd Chronicles 7:14,15 for yourself.

There is no guarantee, but it may be our only hope, and so I will pray, seeking His face, humbling myself and, yes, even turning from my wicked ways. Am I so wicked, yes. Perhaps not measured against many others, but against His righteousness, we are all wicked.

### Middle East (A. of D.)

The Middle East is a boiling cauldron right now. The Arab Spring hasn't developed as our government believed and hoped that it would.

The massacre of the four Americans in Benghazi even in our safe, dedicated buildings and compound was not a surprise to those who understand the Bible.

It is the hatred between those God chose to be His people and those people He rejected. They both had their roots in Abraham, But Ishmael first was rejected, and later Esau forsook his birthright. The Jews are God's people in a unique sense. He had with them an everlasting covenant. What is difficult with "everlasting?" Is God unable to make His own covenant? Can we tell Him, or can Islam tell Him, who His covenant should be with? Off course not.

We cannot know when God decides this Age has run its course. Jesus said He and the angels did not know the date when He was to return. Only the Father knows. We have hints, signs of the times, but Jesus Himself suggested we watch for in an hour we think not, behold the Son of Man cometh.

Trying to establish a date is and always has proved to be disastrous, but to suggest we know when He cannot come . . . seems too bold. I will seek to learn, but I was also watch and hope, pray and preach.

We have the fascinating prophecy concerning the Abomination of Desolation. This intrigues us and, in fact, has intrigues Biblical scholars for centuries.

It, as a term, mentioned 5 times in the Bible. If you're interested you may want to read those five (Daniel 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11, and then also/ Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14.) You'll find the material written by Co-Editor Wally Winner for his September issue of Dot-to-Dot of interest. You'll also want a copy of that.

### **Grace & Truth**

This issue is not a matter of either one, but both. Now balancing both seems to be difficult. Luther struggles with the Biblical book of James over the issue. It continues to be a discussion and was the featured theme this summer's General Conference.

It begins in John 1:14, Jesus is described as "full of grace and truth," and that is used as standard by which many Christians measure their own character. Obviously, as this was said of Jesus, it must be a good thing.

But, though I've been challenged that I may not know anything about "grace," I continue to see grace overcoming truth. Yes, grace is from God and covers our sins, but too often has been used as an excuse for poor behavior, which seems to be what Paul himself had in mind when he wrote, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid."

This needs further "honest" consideration.

### **Heritage Conf. (2012 & 2013)**

In September the Church of God History Committee successfully sponsored its 8th Annual Conference, not called the Heritage Conference. Not too many think this should be of interest as they want to focus on the future.

But until we look and the past and learn from it, we program ourselves to make mistakes which could have been avoided since a previous generation has discovered them previously. We ignore the past at our own peril.

The Committee expanded this year by asking, and he graciously accepting, David Krogh to serve with us. David in his years as president of our organization has accumulated myriads of historical detail that will contribute hugely to the Committee's future work.

Committee members include: Janet Stilson (ABC Archivist), Arlen Rankin, Jennifer Winner, Greg Demmitt, David Krogh and Kent Ross (Com. Coordinator).

Should time last, next year's Heritage Conference will convene at the North Hills Church, near Springfield, Ohio from Thursday, September 19 through noon on Saturday, September 21, 2013. Mark your calendars."

Kent H. Ross

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## **Insights from Flying Geese**



Perhaps you have seen geese flying through the sky in a “V” formation. Christians can learn some valuable lessons from their habits.

Flying in a “V” formation decreases the wind drag for all but the lead goose. The uplift of the wings of the bird in front make it easier for the flock to fly long distances. Christians can learn from this that we always accomplish far more by working together than by acting individually. That’s why God created the church and instructed us to “bear one another’s burdens.” When we share a common goal and work together in harmony, there is no limit to what can be accomplished.

When flying together in a “V,” the lead goose will drop back into the formation to rest a bit while another takes his place as the leader. We can learn from this that it pays to take turns doing the hard jobs, lest a few become “weary in well doing.” What excuses have you been giving God when asked to serve?

Seasoned goose observers have also noticed that when a goose becomes ill or wounded and falls out of formation, two others will fall out with him and remain behind to nurse him until he recovers enough to join another flock. What a lesson we Christians can learn from this!

Why do we condemn those of our number who fall rather than love and nurse them back to wholeness? If the world knew we would love unconditionally and stand by one another no matter what, we would have to build thousands of new churches to accommodate all the people.

Kent,

We're certainly in the midst of turbulent times. Some feel we're very near the Return of Jesus. Some think we may be speculating about something that may be far off in the future. Some are insisting it cannot occur right away and first there must be a new temple and more.

It is difficult to know for sure, and setting dates is precluded by Jesus' own warning about no one but the Father knowing when it will be. Nevertheless we can observe these things:

- 1 - Ominous signs of looming war in the Middle East - Turkey and Syria, Israel and Iran, and almost all of the Muslim world.
- 2 - The alarming sign of the government of the United States becoming disengaged with the interests of Israel, and more engaged with the Muslim world's interests.
- 3 - The gross immorality into which the bulk of the United States seems to become immersed.
- 4 - The intrusion into our lives and homes and families of the Internet, which for all its genius, also potential is making sin's worst excesses available to even our children.
- 5 - The intolerance being shown against traditional Christian values, espoused by the highest officials in the land.

Whether or no/t this will immediately culminate in Christ's Return, or not, they certainly seem indicative of a growing darkness over our world, and over our own "Christian" country.

Jonah was able through God's urging to call Nineveh to repentance and God withheld His judgment. Might He do the same for us? Even 15 more years, like in Hezekiah's situation? Who knows?

Fred

October 3, 2012

Dear Kent,

Having enjoyed your comments recently regarding the insight of this country's founding fathers, I am moved to make a few comments concerning the direction this country seems to be taking.

It is all too obvious that this nation has "run its course." We have been blessed in that as its citizens, we have perhaps lived under the best of governments. However, as ambassadors of the Kingdom of God we are partakers of the hope of a kingdom to come that will surpass anything we could ever imagine.

We are reminded in Daniel 4:17... "this sentence is by decree of the angelic watchers, and the decision is a command of the holy ones, in order that they may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom he wishes, and sets over it the basest of men."

As much as we would like to think we have a say in governmental affairs, we have to know that God is ultimately "in charge." We have observed down through time rulers of the basest of men, even wearing the cloak of religion, using their power to their advantage enslaving those they rule. Daniel 2 is such a blessing. The vision of Nebuchadnezzar as interpreted through Daniel makes us realize that our hope lies in the fact that when the time is right that "stone cut out of the mountain without hands" will crush the nations of this world along with their rulers.

We read in Psalm 149:5-9 of the "godly ones" carrying out the commands of the king (Jesus) during the millennium to "execute on them the judgment written: this is an honor for all His godly ones. Praise the Lord." It seems there is no turning back this country's decline. We, as God's elect have to look forward. What a hope we have to comfort us through what may be troubled times before God chooses to send His son back to this earth to remedy the situation by which we are surrounded.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. Hebrews 10:23.

Sent with a sound hope concerning the future,  
Pat Rankin

# Which Truth?

By Wally Winner

*Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus replied, "You're correct in saying that I'm a king. I have been born and have come into the world for this reason: to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to me." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" (John 18:37, 38)*

According to Phyllis Tickle - founding editor of the Religion Department of Publishers Weekly - every 500 years Christianity holds a giant "rummage sale" where it "takes a look at its old stuff and decides to sell what it no longer needs. We are going through this kind of giant sale today."<sup>1</sup>

Tickle says, the last "rummage sale" was the Great Reformation. The consensus among many Christian leaders today is that Christianity desperately needs another "sale". "This new style of western Christianity," she said, "is not hierarchal or based on a certain doctrinal system. It's more about community and conversation, not about a set of beliefs and creeds"<sup>2</sup> (emphasis mine).

Interestingly, Brian McLaren a leader of this alleged reformation is being compared to 16th-century reformer Martin Luther (*Brian D. McLaren, A Generous Orthodoxy, Kindle ed. 2009 [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004]*). McLaren's book *A New Christianity* is actually promoted as one that "takes aim at some core doctrinal beliefs." (*McLaren, A New Kind of Christianity, back flap*). He "considers, and rejects, the religious claim that the Bible or some other document can provide certainty" in his book *Finding Faith*<sup>3</sup>. (emphasis mine).

Alan Jones, a former dean of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco believes the Bible should be read "as allegory and metaphor, not as literal truth...We can get to the truth only through inference – through myth and poetry, through metaphor and storytelling. There is no such thing as 'what really happened'"<sup>4</sup> (emphasis mine).

Tickle, McLaren and Jones see the problem as no fixed truth or, maybe, progressive truth. I wonder how they explain Jesus.

Jesus said that there is truth, we needed to know the truth and live the truth. Jesus promised, "*If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples; you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free*" (John 8:31, 32 GNB).



**"If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples; you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31, 32 GNB).**



**"They sought diligently, persistently, carefully, cautiously, profoundly, with perfect honesty and nicely adjusted judgment-until they believed that without doubt or question they had found the truth. That was the end of the search. The man spent the rest of his life hunting up shingles wherewith to protect his truth from the weather."**

**Mark Twain**

A hundred years ago, Mark Twain described the average truth-seeker's practice of seeking until he finds what appeals to him as truth and then holding tenaciously to it regardless of further revelations of truth. Note the following, taken from his writings:

"When you know a man's religious complexion, you know what sort of religious books he reads when he wants some more light and what sort of books he does not read, lest by accident he get more light than he wants.

"We are always hearing of people who are around seeking after truth. I have never seen a [permanent] specimen. I think he has never lived. But I have seen several entirely sincere people who thought they were [permanent] seekers after truth.

"They sought diligently, persistently, carefully, cautiously, profoundly, with perfect honesty and nicely adjusted judgment-until they believed that without doubt or question they had found the truth. That was the end of the search. The man spent the rest of his life hunting up shingles wherewith to protect his truth from the weather."

This, indeed, is a true description of the course taken by many sincere people. Many stay in the sect or denomination in which they were born and raised, without ever looking for further truth, and, in many instances, without even investigating the doctrinal teachings with which they are thus affiliated and to which they thus ignorantly subscribe.

Others do seek for further truth to a certain extent, but do not investigate beyond a certain point. They may progress from the first to the second grade in the School of Christ, but may be quite content to remain there and not go on into the higher grades and into the high school, thus never get to enjoy the "strong meat" of God's Word. They never "grow up," but are content always to remain immature Christians, stunted in growth. The writer of Hebrews, speaking to in some in his day, condemned them as "dull of hearing," saying, *"Much more could be said about this subject. But it is hard to explain, and all of you are slow to understand. By now you should have been teachers, but once again you need to be taught the simplest things about what God has said. You need milk instead of solid food. People who live on milk are like babies who don't really know what is right. Solid food is for mature people who have been trained to know right from wrong. We must try to become mature and start thinking about more than just the basic things we were taught about Christ. We shouldn't need to keep talking about why we ought to turn from deeds that bring death and why we ought to have faith in God"* (Heb. 5:11-6:1 CEV).

The man who wants to build a building would be considered very foolish if he were always laying and relaying the foundation stones and never progress to the superstructure. It is important to lay the foundation, but the Christian who makes proper progress will not stop there; he will forever be occupied in *"not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment"* (Heb. 1, 2).





**Many doctrines believed in and taught through the centuries have not been examined enough to determine their accuracy to the Word of God. Preachers and teachers have dispensed information that was derived from false creeds without giving them a clear biblical test to their truthfulness.**

One reason why many fail to persevere as truth-seekers, to grow properly in knowledge, in the time following their first acceptance of Christ, is that they have acquired the mistaken idea that growth in grace, in the love of God, is all that they are to strive for, and that growth in knowledge is not very important. This idea is a delusion! It is true that between growth in grace and growth in knowledge, growth in grace is the more important. If we have much growth in knowledge without corresponding development in grace, we will be misdeveloped, lopsided - *"Knowledge makes people arrogant, but love builds them up"* (1 Cor. 8:1; 13:2 GW). But this does not mean that growth in knowledge is unimportant, providing it is accompanied by growth in grace.

Note how the Scriptures stress the importance of persevering as truth-seekers, of growth in knowledge. Paul prayed for Christians as follows: *"And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, [in other words, that through your knowledge, you will be able, e.g., to discern between truth and error]"* (Phil. 1:9, 10 ESV); *"that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God,"* (Col. 1:10). Peter wrote: *"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord...Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge...For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren [idle-see margin] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things [including knowledge] is blind, and cannot see afar off...Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord, and Saviour Jesus Christ [thus if one grows properly in knowledge, as well as in grace, he will not be led astray into error]"* (2 Pet. 1:2, 5, 8, 9; 3:17, 18).

Many doctrines believed in and taught through the centuries have not been examined enough to determine their accuracy to the Word of God. Preachers and teachers have dispensed information that was derived from false creeds without giving them a clear biblical test to their truthfulness. Multitudes have accepted what has been delivered to them without testing it against the Word of God. They would not pass the qualification of a Berean: *"The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so"* (Acts 17:10, 11 CEV).

Let us not be of those described by Mark Twain, who find and are satisfied with just a token amount of truth, given in the past (and perhaps mixed with much error) and then spend the rest of their lives hunting shingles to protect it from the weather!

<sup>1</sup> (John Longhurst, "The times they are a-changing" <[christianweek.org / features.php?id=59](http://christianweek.org/features.php?id=59)>).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Brian D. McLaren, Finding Faith - A Search for What Makes Sense, Kindle ed. 2009 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007)



“shewing himself  
that he is God”  
**The Abomination  
of Desolation**

By Wally Winner

In the near future, an event of enormous significance will transpire in Jerusalem, the effects of which will resound throughout the world and throughout eternity.

A man will ascend the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, go into the Holy of Holies within the rebuilt Jewish Temple, and proclaim himself to be God Almighty.

In His Olivet Discourse, a response to His disciple's questions concerning the end of the age, Jesus Christ warned His followers that this event, known as "the abomination of desolation," will be the key event which will trigger the Great Tribulation:

"The day is coming when you will see what Daniel the prophet spoke about - the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing in the Holy Place." Matthew 24:15 (NLT)

When this event occurs, it will dominate contemporary news headlines. Christ tells us it will also be a sign to the world that His Glorious Appearing is close at hand.

The abomination of desolation will mark the beginning of a time of unspeakable violence and human anguish.

In fact, Jesus told His disciples it will be a time of great tribulation such as the world has never seen, nor ever will see again. A cursory glance at Jewish historical events of the past century, which include the Holocaust, Stalin's pogroms, and Muslim attempts to wipe out the Jewish state of Israel, vividly illustrate the depths of human depravity.

Yet, our Lord informs us that these horrors will pale in comparison to those which are to come.

### **What is the Abomination of Desolation?**

In order for people to recognize the abomination of desolation when it takes place, they must first know what it is.

Some translations of the Bible render this phrase the "abomination which causes desolation," a more accurate depiction of the event. For this act of abomination, once committed, will literally cause the desolation of Israel.

On Matthew 24:15, The Bible Knowledge Word Study (Cook Communications Ministries, 2002, Colorado Springs, Colorado) says "Abomination (bdelygma)-This word refers to what is "totally defiling" and the phrase "to what defiles a sacred place and causes it to be left desolate" (BDAC, 172: cf. BAGD, 138). The word occurs four times in Daniel (8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). It could describe a defiling image or action, but it probably refers to a person ("standing"). Although this could refer to the Roman general, Titus, the man described in 2 Thess. 2:3-4 is the likeliest candidate. [bdelygma]

Let the reader understand (anoginaskon noeito)-This is a parenthetical statement that may come from the Gospel writer. But it is not unreasonable to think Jesus is urging a careful reading of Daniel (cf. The Message: "If you've read Daniel, you'll know what I'm talking about"). The reader of the last chapters of Daniel (7-12) will find numerous points of similarity to the circumstances described in vv. 3-30. [anaginosko, noeo]

The first important clue that Jesus gave about the abomination of desolation is found in Luke: "And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the *desolation* thereof is nigh [or near]" (21:20). This verse often causes confusion, with some mistakenly assuming the surrounding of Jerusalem by armies *is* the abomination.

When the verse describes the city being surrounded, it does not say the desolation "has happened," but that it "is near." If something *is near*, it *has not happened yet*. So, the abomination of desolation is NOT Jerusalem being surrounded by armies. These are separate events that occur at different times. Get this clear before continuing!

Let's examine the definitions of the key components in this act of arrogance.

### "Abomination" Defined

Webster's dictionary defines the word "abomination" as a "loathsome or disgusting act."

This serves as an adequate Biblical definition as well, for when the Bible mentions something as an "abomination" it means "an act which is loathsome or disgusting in the eyes of God."

In most instances in which the word "abomination" is used in the Bible, it is used to describe the sin of idolatry.

Therefore, it's reasonable to conclude that the abomination which is the abomination of desolation will be an idolatrous act which will defile the Holy Place.

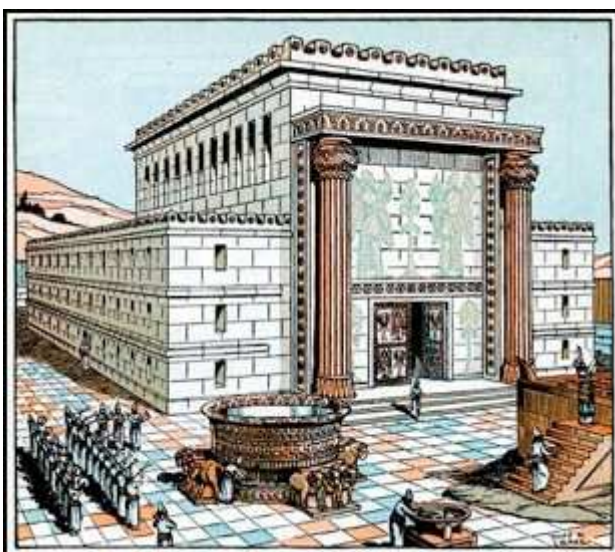
If this is true, then what is "the Holy Place"?

### "The Holy Place" Defined

The "Holy Place" of which Jesus spoke is the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Although some people have interpreted the "holy place" as any number of things - Israel, Jerusalem, the Jews, or the church - the full context of the scriptures makes it fully clear that Jesus is referring to the Jewish Temple.

In the Book of Acts, the Jewish Temple is referred to as the "Holy Place" (emphasis added):

"The seven days were almost ended when some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul in the Temple and roused a mob against him. They grabbed him, yelling, 'Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who preaches against our people everywhere and tells everybody to disobey the Jewish laws. He speaks against the Temple - and even defiles this holy place by bringing in Gentiles.' (For earlier that



day they had seen him in the city with Trophimus, a Gentile from Ephesus, and they assumed Paul had taken him into the Temple.)" Acts 21:27-29 (NLT)

In addition, the prophet Daniel refers to the abomination of desolation in reference to the Jewish Temple:

"He will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. Then as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the end that has been decreed is poured out on this defiler." Daniel 9:27 (NLT)

The fact that the abomination of desolation occurs along with putting "an end to the sacrifices and offerings" is further evidence that the Jewish Temple plays a pivotal role in this infamous event.

So why is the abomination one of "desolation"?

### "Desolation" Defined

Webster's dictionary defines "desolation" as "a barren, neglected state or area." This is the perfect definition for understanding the meaning of our topic. For Jesus tells us that this act will cause the desolation of Israel:

"Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. A person out on the deck of a roof must not go down into the house to pack. A person out in the field must not return even to get a coat. How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for nursing mothers in those days. And pray that your flight will not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For there will be greater anguish than at any time since the world began. And it will never be so great again. In fact, unless that time of calamity is shortened, not a single person will survive. But it will be shortened for the sake of God's chosen ones." Matthew 24:16-22 (NLT)

Once the abomination of desolation takes place, it will soon be followed by unprecedented persecution of the Jewish people. This is difficult

to believe, given our knowledge of the Holocaust. But according to Jesus, these will be the darkest days in Jewish history.

The Jews will face persecution at the hands an arrogant world dictator who will commit the abomination of desolation by proclaiming himself to be God.

### Antiochus IV Epiphanes

Believe it or not, a similar abomination took place in history once before.

In 167 B.C., the Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes erected a statue of Zeus in the Holy of Holies and desecrated the sanctuary and its holy vessels. Several centuries prior to this, the prophet Daniel (in Daniel 11:21-35) prophesied the life and times of this sinister figure. Yet those same verses, in many ways, also apply to a coming ruler, whose life is detailed in Daniel 11:36-45.

Some people claim that Antiochus IV Epiphanes committed the abomination of desolation, thus fulfilling the prophecies of Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15. But this is simply not true.

Although the Book of Daniel was written prior to 167 B.C., the Olivet Discourse took place almost two centuries later. Jesus was well aware





of the abominable acts committed by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. After all, the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah is a celebration of the Temple's liberation from the rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Clearly, Jesus spoke of a future abomination:

"The day is coming when you will see what Daniel the prophet spoke about - the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing in the Holy Place." Matthew 24:15 (NLT)

Although Antiochus IV Epiphanes came in the spirit and power of the coming ruler, the ruler himself will be the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecies in Daniel 11, Daniel 9:27, and Matthew 24:15. This is why Jesus

referred to the desecration of the Temple as a still future event.

If we examine the signs of the times, we'll find God is warning us that this future event will take place soon – perhaps in our generation.

### **An Antichrist and the Abomination of Desolation**

The Book of Revelation provides us with further knowledge regarding an antichrist and his monumental act of desecration:

"He ordered the people to make a great statue of the first beast, who was fatally wounded and then came back to life. He was then permitted to give life to this statue so that it could speak. Then the statue of the beast commanded that anyone refusing to worship it must die." Revelation 13:14-15 (NLT)

This antichrist will fulfill this prophesy by standing in the Jewish Temple and proclaiming himself to be God. He will set up an image in the Holy Place and demand the world worship it.

Such a scenario is in full agreement with the apostle Paul's description of this ruler and his character:

"He will exalt himself and defy every god there is and tear down every object of adoration and worship. He will position himself in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God." 2 Thessalonians 2:4 (NLT)

This antichrist will not just be an enemy of God Almighty, but of anything which distracts the human race from the worship of himself as the one true God. Needless to say, this antichrist will be quite arrogant.

Unfortunately, much of the world will answer the call to worship him:

"And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not



written in the Book of Life before the world was made - the Book that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered." Revelation 13:8 (NLT)

### **The Arrogance of the Antichrist**

The abomination of desolation is not only an act of rebellion against God Almighty, but a proclamation of inflated self-worth. Another being proclaiming himself to be God is the ultimate act of arrogance, and the Bible reveals, this antichrist will be the most arrogant individual in history:

"This little horn had eyes like human eyes and a mouth that was boasting arrogantly." Daniel 7:8 (NLT)

"The king will do as he pleases, exalting himself and claiming to be greater than every god there is, even blaspheming the God of gods." Daniel 11:36 (NLT)

"He will have no regard for the god of his ancestors, or for the god beloved of women, or for any other god, for he will boast that he is greater than them all. Instead of these, he will worship the god of fortresses - a god his ancestors never knew - and lavish on him gold, silver, precious stones, and costly gifts." Daniel 11:37-38 (NLT)

This antichrist will be so filled with self-love and hubris that he will launch a spiritual and physical rebellion against God Almighty. He will place himself above all others, attempting to overthrow the Lord of the universe and set his own throne, if he could, high above God's stars.

#### **He Will Attack God's Holy People**

As part of his campaign to create universal worship of himself, this antichrist will set out to destroy those who are faithful to God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

"And the beast was allowed to wage war against God's holy people and overcome them." Revelation 13:7 (NLT)

"He will destroy powerful leaders and devastate the holy people. He will be a master of deception, defeating many by catching them off guard. Without warning he will destroy them. He will even take on the Prince of princes in battle, but he will be broken, though not by human power." Daniel 8:24-25 (NLT)

This antichrist will wield enormous power, and he will "devastate" the holy people of God. But he will meet his demise when he challenges the Prince of princes in battle - the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **When Will the Abomination of Desolation Occur?**

The Bible is clear that the abomination of desolation will occur three and a half years after he makes a covenant with Israel:

"The ruler will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven, but after half this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him." Daniel 9:27 (NLT)

This antichrist will sign a treaty with the state of Israel for a period of seven years.

The details and nature of this treaty are yet unknown, but many have speculated that in a bid to secure peace with its neighbors, Israel will agree to rely on this future ruler for its national security.



# OVERVIEW: PROPHECY

33 AD



God refers to this agreement as a "covenant with Sheol" (or hell), and God's assessment will prove true when this antichrist breaks this covenant after three and a half years.

The abomination of desolation will serve as a public acknowledgment that he is breaking his treaty with Israel, and it will signal the beginning of the Great Tribulation, a time of unprecedented persecution of God's people:

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where God had prepared a place to care for her for 1,260 days." Revelation 12:6 (NLT)

The woman referenced in this passage is the nation of Israel, which gave birth to the Messiah.

Because of this antichrist's persecution, the nation of Israel will be forced to flee into the wilderness, where God will supernaturally protect her. This ruler's campaign of persecution against the Jews will last 1,260 days, which is 3.5 biblical years.

## Conclusion

The implications of the abomination of desolation cannot be overstated. Our generation has already witnessed the fulfillment and initial fulfillment of most of the Bible's endtime's prophecies.

The Jews have been gathered from distant lands to resurrect the nation of Israel. The Jews are in possession of Jerusalem. The Gog and Magog alliance is forming. All of these are signs of the times. Yet, in order for the abomination of desolation to occur, still another event must take place - the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple.

Many in the secular world and some within Christianity view the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple as a highly improbable event. Yet, God Himself has told us the Jewish Temple will exist in the last days. Therefore, when the Temple is rebuilt, it will serve as a sign to the entire world that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is God Almighty.

Nearly the entire world - a billion Muslims, countless Anti-Semites, world leaders and diplomats, and even Israeli politicians frightened of war - speak with one voice when it comes to the idea of rebuilding the Jewish Temple. "It will never happen!" they say. But God has other plans. The Temple will be rebuilt, and soon thereafter, the world will tremble when a man of unprecedented power and frightening arrogance visits its inner sanctuary.

Knowing that everything the Lord has revealed to His prophets is destined for fulfillment, we should pray for the people of this world, while living our lives for the next and remaining alert to the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

"Keep alert at all times. And pray that you might be strong enough to escape these coming horrors and stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:36 (NLT)

# RACING TO THE FINISH LINE!

By Sara Jane (Peters) McLaughlin



As Americans we have an abundance of sports, competitions and athletic events that are available to us as spectators or participants if we are so inclined! We are finishing up the Baseball season and will soon be into the World Series. We have the Football season upon as well with everyone cheering for their favorite team. And beyond that we anticipate Super Bowl Sunday, the beginning of Basketball and then back to the Baseball Season. And if these are not your favorites there is Soccer, Wrestling, Marathons, Triathlons, Swimming, Gymnastics, Tennis and the list is unending.

Sport competitions are as old as civilization. I believe that God designed us humans with a desire to be competitive and we love to seek pleasure and many find that in the sports world. History indicates that Egypt had organized sports competitions. We read in 2 Samuel chapters 2-3 the competition between David's men led by Joab and Saul's men led by Abner. Didn't exactly turn out so well for some of them as their event was rooted in jealousy and hatred!

Millions watched this summer as the Summer Olympics were carried out in London. Bill and I were part of that audience and so enjoyed watching the games unfold as we witnessed athletes who have excelled to be the best in the world. We know that the Olympic Games were originally started in Greece in 776 B.C. They were held every 4 years until abolished by the Roman Emperor Theodosius. They were revived 1500 years later and were re-instituted by the international community in 1896

I was never an athletic person in my youth. At that time sports for girls were not provided. Also, because of my childhood illness, I was subdued activity wise as well. However, when I came to Alaska I entered a dogsled race and came in second! Dog sled racing is Alaska's state sport.

This Spring my family made a trip to Hawaii or The Big Island in the Kona vicinity. We had a great time swimming, parasailing plus many fun adventures. It was great to go and break up the winter and soak up some sun in the midst of our cold and dark season. However, the main reason we all went there was to cheer on our son Sean and his wife Jodi who participated in the Lava Man Triathlon. Our granddaughter Molly, Bill and I got in the spirit of events and entered a 5K run along with our daughter Maureen and her husband Mark. Granddaughters Molly and Megan entered the Kid's Lava Man which was just the swim and run portion.

Triathlons are a multi-sport event involving the completion of 3 continuous and sequential endurance events. Usually the events are individual swim, bike and run components. There is the intermediate or standard distance commonly referred to as "Olympic Distance" which is the type that Sean and Jodi entered. This consists of a 1.5K Swim, 40K bike and a 10K run. They both placed well in the over 1500 participants and had impressive wins and personal best times.





It was there as I was observing the events I began to ponder the similarities and differences of sports and competition and racing in general in comparison with our spiritual race. So I decided to write "Racing to the Finish Line". For the purpose of this article we will use running and walking interchangeable. Honestly, at my age walking sounds more appealing! A race course has a starting line and a finishing line. Walking or running one must start and one must finish to complete the race.

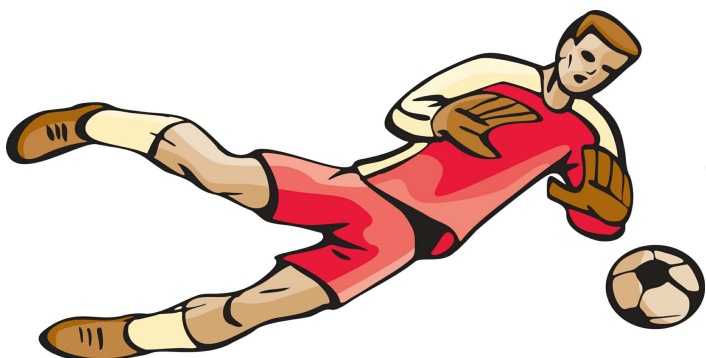


When one enters a race a fee must be paid. I entered the race when I was 13 years old. In our race our fee was paid for by the Lord Jesus Christ who died on the cross. This was the requirement to pay for our sins. There was no way we could pay for our fee. I like to compare it to the home run I needed to get to home base. There was no way I could get a home run on my own. I could never have achieved such a feat. Christ was the only one who could hit it out of the park so I could get to home base. Thank you Jesus for that victory!

Athletes wear special attire. There are special shoes, shorts and tops or suits such as tri-suits. Some wear helmets. According to Colossians 3:12 apparel for the Christian athlete is compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Ephesians refers to our spiritual armor as well that is vital to the Christian walk. We wear the helmet of salvation, the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness and our shoes are the gospel of peace. We have a shield of faith, and we hold the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God our Bible. Satan has not declared a cease fire so the Christian needs to be outfitted at all times with this attire and equipment.

Athletes have food and liquid guidelines before and during their events. They have high energy foods and take great care in hydrating themselves properly. Christian athletes must have spiritual food and water to be well nourished and hydrated. We ask the Lord daily to supply us with bread as the example was given in the Lord's prayer. Jesus declares this in John 6: 35. "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." Jesus completely satisfies our spiritual hunger and thirst. May we hunger and thirst after His righteousness and be filled! (Matthew 5:6) May we "Taste and see that Lord is good." Psalm 34:8

Most athletes examine the race course, study it and become quite familiar with the course they are going to race on. Christian athletes cannot do this. We walk by Faith according to 2 Corinthians 5:7. "We live by faith, not by sight." Our race course is a matter of not having any idea where we are going and what is going to happen next. Because of this we have several helps.



God is our guide. We are not left alone on this journey. We are promised in Hebrews 13:5 "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you". A guide is one who knows the way. The beginning and the end of the path. He is always with us.

Your **WORD** is a **LAMP** to my feet and a **LIGHT** to my path.

Psalm 119:105



Psalm 119:105 says "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path". All we have to do is to consult the Scriptures for it will show us the way to go and a light to see. We don't walk in darkness. It is the official guide book. Bill and I relied on the Milepost which is a guide to traveling to and from Alaska when we started driving the highway in the 1980's. We would have been totally lost without. How much more direction does the Word of God tell us where and how to go. We would be totally lost without our official guide book.

God promises in Psalm 32:8 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you".

Proverbs 16:9 says "In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps. Backing that up Proverbs 20:24 tells us "A man's steps are directed by the LORD. What I gather from these verses God has designed a very unique race course for each of us. All we need to do is follow the Shepherd as David illustrates in Psalm 23. The Shepherd knows the way. He would not lead us in a path that is not wise, not safe and would bring harm to us. Instead He leads us in paths that bring blessing.

Psalm 25:4-5 "Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior.

I can't begin to fathom the amount of training, practice, commitment and the total devotion athletes assume. In our race we don't prepare in advance for our race. However, once we assume the race we become totally devoted to our Lord. He becomes our passion. We die to self and sacrifice daily to become imitators of Christ. It doesn't happen all at once. It's a constant process of examining our walk to see if we are growing and maturing.

Athletes are in top physical condition. Strength, stamina, and endurance is at an optimum. Our walk requires us to draw on the strength of the Lord. Anything done with our strength is an act of the flesh. Paul was told by the Lord in 2 Corinthians 12:9 "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness". Paul continues to share with believers in following verses that "therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong".



We can claim what David claimed in Psalm 18:32-36. "It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights. He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great. You broaden the path beneath me, so that my ankles do not turn."

Most athletes would stop and help someone in need if the occasion arises. Someone gets hurt and needs attention immediately the general rule is you stop and help. I've witnessed the camaraderie among athletes. They are very interested in how their fellow competitors are

performing, how their times have improved, and the support they give each other. Our Christian walk is wonderful because we know we have such a great community of encouragers around us. They bring comfort and support in times of need. How wonderful to share with other believers how our walk is going and to hear how their race is progressing.

Although we all have individual paths and everyone has a unique race course our paths parallel and intersect with other believers. What a great design that Christ had for the church to have a Brotherhood and Sisterhood to share our walks with. As a believer I know I could definitely improve my concern for other believers. Where should I be giving more encouragement, who needs a listening ear, who could use financial assistance, who should I be lifting up in prayer, who needs a visit, who would like a bouquet of flowers, who would like to be served a meal.



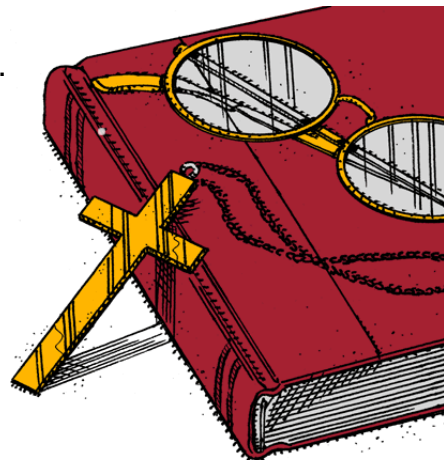
The morning of the Lava Man race Jodi sent us a text saying “This is going to be fun!” It sounded like too much work to me! Her joy was evident throughout the race; determined but enjoying the challenge and the opportunity she had chosen. Her little daughter Megan who is 6 ran and swam in a 7-9 year old event also had a contagious smile on her face the entire race. Even though she was one of the last ones to finish she was content in what she was doing. Nehemiah 8:10 says “The joy of the LORD is your strength”! My countenance and attitude as a Christian is being observed by others. Unfortunately, this is an area I struggle with but glad to report I’ve made great strides in overcoming this area. I love to observe other Christians who are jubilant, fun to be around, and definitely display contentment in their circumstances. We know God desires us to be joyful. It is a fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians. If we are feeling lack of strength maybe it’s time to evaluate if there is joy in our walk.

Athletes encourage others to join their “band of brotherhood”. I’ve seen this very true for marathoners and triathletes. Jesus tells the parable in Matthew 22 of sending servants to invite others to a banquet. We learn from this that we are to be sharing the Good News or the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We want others to join in the race and at the very end of our race we will have a banquet. Revelation 19:6-7 says “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.” The Great Commission is also very convicting. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus closes out this book with these words: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Mark 16: 20 confirms that is exactly what the disciples did. I have to admit sharing the Gospel is very difficult for me. Not because I don’t believe it but it is not in my comfort zone. Again, the Lord gives us grace and mercy as we grow and mature as struggling believers. And I’m so thankful for that. I don’t pretend to have all the answers, all the finesse or the accomplishments as a believer for as many years as I have been in this race.

What is our focus in our race? What keeps us from distractions, losing interest, or forgetting what is waiting for us that very end when we cross the finish line? In the world of athletes it’s crossing the finish line itself, the sense of finishing, the sense of accomplishment, the completion of what

they have trained for days, months and years is exhilarating! The Christian athlete focuses on Jesus! He is the prize awaiting us. Remember the old song: "It will be worth it all, when we see Jesus, Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ; One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, So bravely run the race 'til we see Christ!"

Hebrews 12 :1-3 continues the theme of our eyes on Jesus. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." Christ finished his work here on earth. We must keep Him as our focus to keep our race strong and finish well.



**Let us keep our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.**

Hebrews 12:2

Our race has mountains, valleys, deserts & ups and downs, and many obstacles in the path. I love the mountain tops when I can look back to what I've come through and have overcome. When Bill and I entered the 5K Sunset run in Hawaii although I had never competed before I knew I would finish! After 2 miles my right foot gave me indication it could not handle this much longer. I sent Bill and Molly onward with the assurance I would take my time but I would finish, which I did. Now we find out that my right foot and ankle is "totally maxed out" (the doctor's words!) with arthritis. I am never to run a race again! Disappointing of course but this is our spiritual race as well. Disappointments, discouragements, sorrows, and all that the world offers us are what we face daily. I have started and will finish this race! I am not the best racer. I am not the fastest. God does not call us to be successful. He calls us to be triumphant in Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:14 says "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ." I will see you at the finish line! The finish line is when we have been called forth from our graves and will be caught up to meet the Lord Jesus Christ at His return! We shall have such a gathering, a celebration unequalled, such singing and praising to the Savior who paid the price to allow us to start this race and the grace to finish.

Philippians 1:6 "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." God will complete what He starts. It may be painful, it probably involves change, and it will require adjustments. I love these verses from Matthew 12:20 which is a quote from Isaiah. "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out." Yes, I have been bruised and my flame has almost gone out. But Christ in His mercy and grace has brought me healing and fanned the flame .

*I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

The Apostle Paul used terms associated from the sports events. He would have known about Greek and Roman events. In 1 Corinthians he asks the question: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as 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; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. "Paul was a fierce runner. He understood that sacrificing in this life is well worth what he would receive in eternal life. In Philippians 3: 14 Paul also tells us that "I press on

toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus”.

These are Scriptures that instruct us on how to run:

Walk in Love	Ephesians 5:1, 2 John 1:6
Walk in the Spirit	Galatians 5:18
Walk by Faith	2 Corinthians 5:7
Walk in the Word	Colossians 3:16
Walk in His Steps	1 Peter 2:21
Walk in Praise and Worship	Psalms 150
Walk in Truth	John 16:13
Walk in Thanksgiving	1 Thessalonians 5:18
Walk in Confidence	2 Corinthians 5:6, Hebrews 13:5-6
Walk in Obedience	2 John 1:6
Walk in the Light	1 John 1:7
Walk in Hope	Hebrews 10:23

I love the song “Dare to Run” by Harlan Moore and Joel W. Smith that is always such an encouragement to me.

*“The assembly of the faithful, surrounding, yet unseen,*

*Is gathered as a witness to the race.*

*And on the track awaiting are the runners of today;*

*The call has come for each to take his place.*

*The road ahead is narrow, the way is sometimes steep,*

*And only the committed claim the prize.*

*But standing at the finish with arms outstretched to greet us,*

*Is the One who has endured the race, and paid the final price!*

*Dare to run with our eyes fixed on Jesus, Following the footsteps of the One who’s gone before us.*

*Dare to run in the power of His Spirit, Called to be victors in a race already won;*

*dare to run.*

*We must have our Savior’s vision, compassion for the lost; Courage for the future, love at any cost.*

*Dare to run.*

May we all dare to run, to press on, to fight the good fight, to remain faithful. See you at the finish line.



**Editor's Note:**

**Here are the first of our three articles expressing our general understanding of the essential truths of the Bible. More will be coming. ~~ Kent Ross**

# **Jesus, The Son of God**

By Dave Hixon



"None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8).

The Roman Pontius Pilate, faced a difficult situation when Jesus was brought before him. He attempted to dismiss the picture that was emerging in front of him. When Pilate heard the accusation, it struck fear into his heart. *"He has claimed to be the Son of God"* (John 19:7).

Pilate's next question betrayed his fear that he was not dealing with an ordinary man. He had just been given a message from his wife, who received a warning in a dream not to have anything to do with this innocent man. Pilate himself knew that Jesus had been delivered to him because the chief priests were jealous of and despised Him. Yet Pilate couldn't avoid his date with destiny. He next asked Jesus, "Where are You from?" (John 19:9). Pilate already knew He was Galilean. But where this Jewish teacher came from was not the question. Where are you *really from* is what Pilate wanted to know. Jesus was silent. His claim to be the Son of God had already answered this question. But Pilate did not have the courage to deal with this answer.

Accepting the real answer would have made all the difference. The apostle Paul said that none of the rulers of this world knew who Jesus was, where He came from and His purpose for coming, "If they would have understood, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8). Pilate could not face this issue. He knew what was right, but he feared losing power. He feared Caesar's reaction if it were reported that he did not deal with someone who posed a threat to Roman control in the region. He feared a popular uprising if he did not agree to the Jewish leaders' demands. He also feared Jesus, because he was not quite sure with whom he was dealing. In the end politics won out. The stage was set to both convict all mankind of guilt and make provision for their forgiveness. Pilate gave the order for Jesus to be crucified.

Most of us tend to ignore unpleasant realities and make choices that we think are beneficial to us. Confronted with evidence as to who Jesus really was, would you face a reality that is too difficult for you to accept? Deep down, maybe we realize it would change life as we know it. So maybe it's better, we reason, not to look into this matter too deeply to leave ourselves an out. That's the route Pilate took.

But this is where we have to begin. Who, really, was Jesus of Nazareth? Where did He really come from? If we understand that, it explains everything He did and said. Most see Jesus as a teacher, a wise man, a Jewish scholar who died an unjust and horrible death and founded a great religion. Is there more to it than that? One of the most controversial topics is the true identity of Jesus Christ—and at the same time it is perhaps the most crucial. It lies at the heart of the Christian faith.

**Turn with me to John 1:1-5- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him,**

and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

This is one of the most debated texts of all time in your bible. When we look at the word WORD (Capitalized) we could get the sense of a person couldn't we?

What is the Greek word used here? It is Logos. Now if we look at any Greek Dictionary what does it say about this word, what is the definition? Logos means- utterance (spoken word), promise, command, or a plan. IT IS NEVER USED AS A PERSON!!

I don't want you to just believe me, I want each of you to go home and look up the word LOGOS.

Prior to 1582, if you look at ANY of the eight English translations of the bible, you would see something very remarkable. This is how John 1:1-5 was translated. “In the beginning was the word (small w) and the word was with God (meaning his plan was known to Him) and the word was God (God's plan showed us who He was) we will speak more on that later... IT was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through IT. Remember back to the Creation? GOD SAID AND IT WAS SO!!! LOGOS IS GODS SPOKEN WORD OR PLAN!! and apart from IT nothing came into being that has come into being. In it (God's word and plan) In it was life, and the life was the Light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

If you look back to the story of creation there was light three days before God created the Sun and the stars. It was the power of God over the earth.

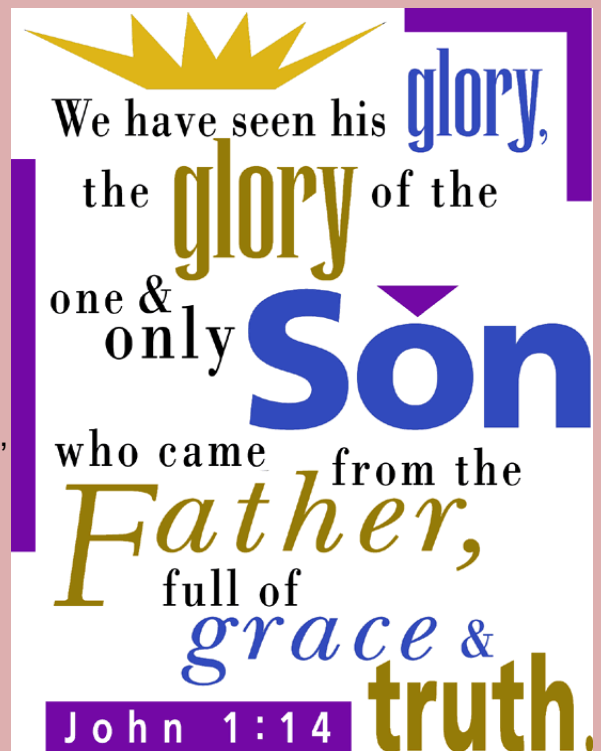
Through this same divine power, the man Christ Jesus was born. He was born unique in that he was quite literally the Son of the Living God.

God's plan, was exemplified in the Man Jesus Christ. John 1:14- “And the Word (God's Plan!) became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

This brings us to another word, begotten. Begotten means to sire, to procreate. In other words, God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, FATHERED Jesus through the seed of Mary, a virgin.

How many of you have seen the “logo” for Chevy? I am sure we all have. You see the symbol for Chevy and you immediately know what that symbol represents. Well if you look up the English word “logo”, guess where it comes from? LOGOS! It comes from the Greek word logos. A “logo” is a representation of something. Jesus became the logo for God! The REPRESENTATION OF GOD! He became the epitome of God's plan.

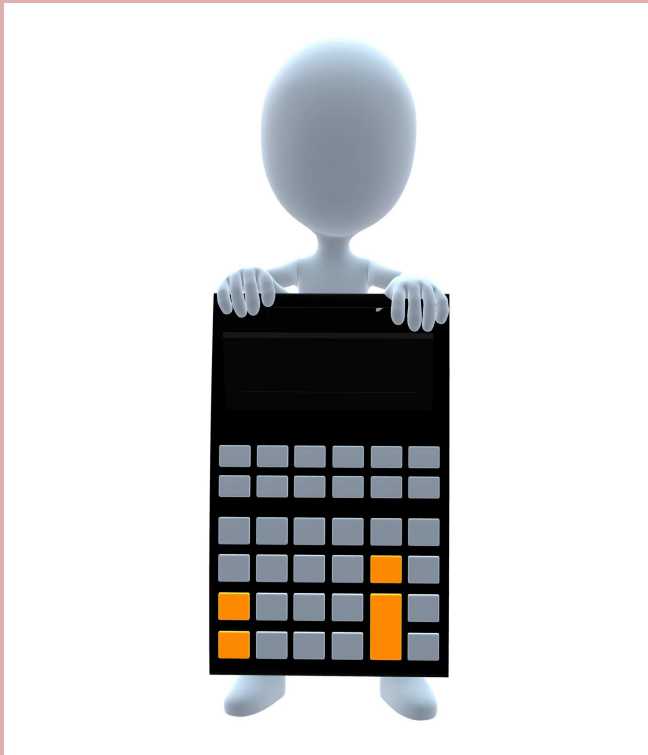
Jesus was the Messiah meaning He was the promised King. BORN to fulfill that destiny. God would later put him in the position of a mediator between man and God.



How many prophecies were written about this Messiah? The Old Testament contains 300 prophetic passages that describe who the Messiah is and what He will do. Of these, 60 are major prophecies. What are the chances of these prophecies being fulfilled in one person?

The mathematical odds that all of these prophecies could have converged by chance in the events of the life of Jesus are staggeringly minute—to the point of eliminating any such possibility. Astronomer and mathematician Peter Stoner, in his book *Science Speaks*, offers a mathematical analysis showing that it is impossible that the precise statements about the One to come could be fulfilled in a single person by mere coincidence.

The chance of only eight of these dozens of prophecies being fulfilled in the life of one man has been estimated at 1 in 10 to the 17th power. That would be 1 chance in 100,000,000,000,000,000.



How can we put this in terms we can comprehend? Dr. Stoner illustrates the odds with this scenario: "Take 10 to the 17th power silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas [with its approximate land area of 262,000 square miles]. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one."

What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man.

But that is only eight of the dozens of prophecies of the Messiah. Using the science of probability, the chance of as many as 48 of these prophecies coming to pass in one person is 1 in 10 to the 157th power—a 1 followed by 157 zeros.

Jesus was who he said he was.

Now, let's look at a few of the examples of these prophecies:

In Galatians 3:8 and 16, Paul explains that the promise made to Abraham, "In you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18), was a reference to the coming Messiah. This promise was later repeated to Abraham's son Isaac (Genesis 26:4) and then later passed on through Abraham's grandson Jacob (Genesis 28:14).

**Several hundred years later the future Messiah was prophesied to come through Jesse, the father of King David, of the tribe of Judah—one of Jacob's 12 sons. "There shall come forth a Rod [Shoot] from the stem [stock] of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of His roots" (Isaiah 11:1). David was the son of Jesse from whom the line would come that would produce Jesus of Nazareth some 30 generations later. Through the prophet**



Jeremiah, God foretold that He would "raise up to David a righteous Branch" (Jeremiah 23:5).

In this amazing progression of prophecies, beginning some 1,500 years before the Messiah would come, we are told in precise terms what the human lineage of the Christ would be. Jesus fulfilled these promises, as the apostle Matthew shows us in recording the descent of Jesus through the line of King David. The number of people who potentially could have fulfilled the messianic prophecies narrows greatly when limited to this family.

The Jews of Jesus' day also knew that the Messiah was to come from Bethlehem. This was plainly understood from Micah 5:2: "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 His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

There were two Bethlehems, one in the region of Ephrathah in Judea and the other to the north, in the region of the tribe of Zebulun. But Micah's prophecy is precise. The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Ephrathah. Jesus was born in this Bethlehem in Judea. The prophecies discussed so far strongly point to Jesus, but they are not conclusive. Other people could have qualified if you use only these three as the criteria. But these are only the beginning.

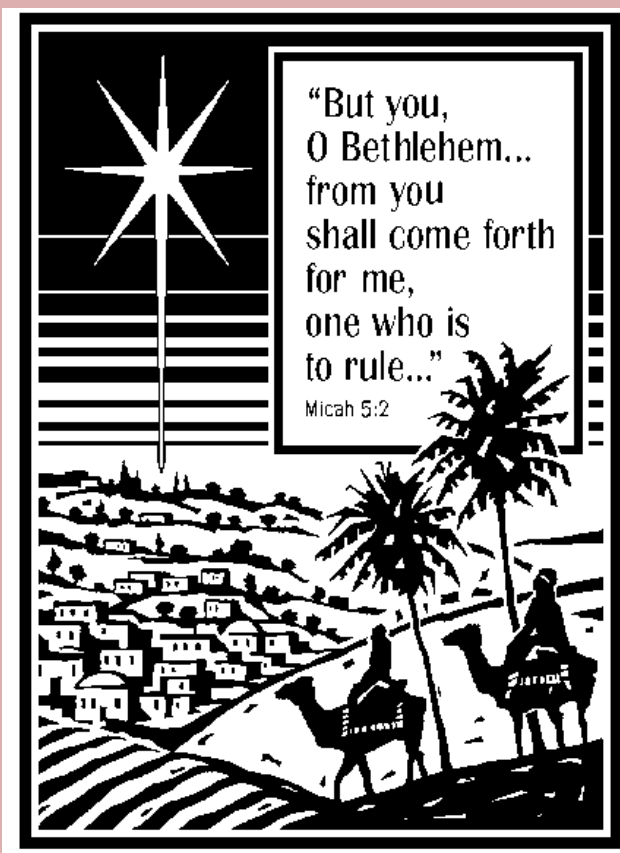
A remarkable prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 foretells the unique birth of Jesus by a virgin: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."

Before Jesus was born, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that his wife to be, Mary, was expecting a child—conceived not by man, but by the Spirit of God. The angel referred to this prophecy from Isaiah.

Moses, considered the greatest of the Hebrew prophets and teachers, wrote the messianic prophecy that God would raise up a Prophet like himself from among Israel, and He would directly represent God (Deuteronomy 18:15).

Jesus was regarded as a prophet. After He had miraculously multiplied fish and bread to feed the 5,000, Jesus was regarded specifically as the prophet of whom Moses had spoken. Peter later explicitly referred to Jesus as this prophet Acts 3:20-23- "and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. "Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'"

**The Old Testament prophecies of the details of the suffering and death of the Messiah were not at all well understood in Jesus' day. The Jews believed that the Messiah they**



were looking for would be a victorious king who would deliver them from the hated Romans and restore an Israelite kingdom—not a humble Teacher who would endure suffering and death for the sins of mankind.

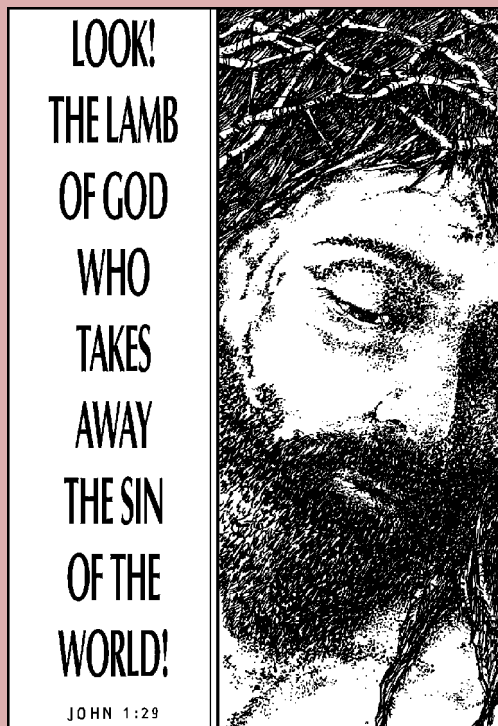
Yet this is a major area of Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfillment. Virtually every aspect of Jesus' suffering and death was spelled out in considerable detail centuries before it actually happened. The true picture revealed in these prophecies is that the Messiah would be "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The people did not expect the promised Deliverer, the conquering King, to be One who would first give His life for others.

Hebrews 10:12 tells us that the death of Christ was the offering for sin once and for all: "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God." Verses 5-7 of Hebrews 10 quote Psalm 40:6-8 and describe the willingness of Christ to surrender Himself as a sacrifice to pay the price for the sins of everyone.

The sacrificial system God instituted in ancient Israel was a representation of Jesus' sacrifice that would pay this price once and for all. Shedding the blood of bulls, heifers, sheep and goats could not take away sin. Only the shed blood Christ, the only human being ever born who has not sinned, could atone for their sins as well as the sins of every other human being. The sacrifices that were commanded under Moses pictured in a very graphic way the future sacrificial death of humanity's Savior for our sins. In this sense the sacrificial system itself was prophetic of the Messiah.

So as we can see, this Jesus, the "logo" of God, gives us a glimpse of our ONE true God. He became the perfect sacrifice for all of mankind. And the good news? This same Savior is returning to the earth to usher in the fullness of God's Glorious Kingdom.

Come, Lord Jesus.



**Editor's Note:**

Here are the second of our three articles expressing our general understanding of the essential truths of the Bible. More will be coming. ~~ Kent Ross

# **ROCK of MY SALVATION JESUS**

## **SALVATION ONLY THROUGH CHRIST**

### **Acts 4:12**

By Dale H. Swartz

And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). What an authoritative statement boldly expressed by the "unlearned and ignorant" Peter, the son a fisherman! In addition, the Church, founded by the Messiah Jesus has been established on the fact that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Down through the ages there have been individuals who have to tried to convince others that they are the messiah, but the true Christian is not swayed. The inspired Holy Scriptures declare God's plan of salvation for all humanity that makes eternal life a living hope for every man, woman and child; but it is only through Christ.

Peter was only one of many, who witnessed Jesus after his resurrection and thus firmly convince of who He was, helped turn the world "upside down" with the gospel message of the coming Kingdom of God. However, how soon people try to find a shortcut. Paul encounter people in Galatia who were being taught another gospel or as Paul put it "a perverted gospel. I have often wondered by people wanted to change the message of Jesus in the first place. Did they not believe the teaching of the Apostle Peter? It did not take long before the critics of Jesus' teaching began perverting the gospel. What we find is that shortly after the ascension of Jesus many people, including the Apostle Paul, encountered a perversion of Peter's great statement that there was only one way to salvation and way is through Jesus Christ.

The text is Acts 17, the setting is in the city of Philippi and as the custom of the Apostle Paul was, he was preaching Jesus in an outdoor setting. He had just baptized a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira. He was now going to a place of prayer when a "slave-girl who had a spirit of

divination” met him. This slave-girl was a fortune-teller and was able to provide her master with untold wealth through her satanic ability. “Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, ‘these men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation’. She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come of her!’ And it came out at that very moment”. (Acts 16:17-18) As I have read this passage from time to time throughout my ministry, I have wondered why Paul would be annoyed by this woman telling other people that he and his companions were preaching about the way of salvation. Is this not what they were doing? Would he not have appreciated her help? Instead, he is upset by what she is saying.

Since Paul as well as today’s true believers know that salvation can only come through Christ, and since Paul was annoyed by what this woman was saying, it just might take some good old fashion Bible Study to figure out the truth of this passage.

A study of Acts 16:17 reveals that the slave girl was right in saying that Paul and his companions were committed bondservants or ‘slaves’ fully subject to the Most High God. A question to answer might be “what does “the most high God” mean to the Greeks and the Romans since they had many gods. The fact that the Greeks worshipped many gods is clear as Paul makes mention of it on Mars Hill in Acts 17:22-23. In looking at the Greek text, we find that there is no definite article in verse 17 and that the passage actually reads that Paul was proclaiming “**a way**” of salvation instead of “**the way**” of salvation. Now this changes everything. If Acts 16:17 truly said “**a way**” of salvation then the slave girl who was following Paul was contradicting his message by saying in effect, ‘there are many ways to find salvation and these men, who are servants of the most high God, are simply share a new way that we hadn’t heard of before. The Greeks and Romans as well as people of all nationalities believed in some type of higher power. Even today, people strive to push a social agenda saying we need to be politically correct and not say anything that will offend someone else. That is why when we talk about Jehovah, God Almighty, other people speak of a higher power. People who follow Islam believe the way to salvation is through Mohammad. In other religions of the world people believe salvation is through Tao, Confucius, or even Zoroaster. However, Christians know from the Holy Scriptures that God provided the man Christ Jesus to be our savior and mediator and that everlasting life in the kingdom of God come **ONLY** through the Messiah Jesus, the Son of the living God.



The bride of Christ has nothing for which to be ashamed. We preach Jesus Christ who was crucified, risen, and is coming again. This man Jesus is the only way to salvation. Peter could have said it any plainer when he said: “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

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# **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

By Jeff Fletcher

Hopefully, we can all agree that Jesus is who he claimed to be and who God said he was “My Son, Whom I Love.” (Matthew 3:17) That being the case, then it stands to reason that when God’s beloved son tells his disciples/students/apprentices that something is to be given a priority, they (we) should give serious attention to it. In his Sermon on the Mt. recorded in Matthew’s Gospel Jesus gives the following instructions: In stark contrast to the pagans (unbelievers) who spend the bulk of their time anxiously worrying about the basics of physical survival ie. food, drink, clothing and whether tomorrow they will have what they need to live, Jesus’ disciples are to give priority to God’s Kingdom and righteousness. (Matthew 6:25-34)

The Greek word Matthew used is *protos* which means: “first in time or place, in any succession of things or persons, first in rank, influence, honor, chief, principal” (Strong’s Concordance). *Basileia* is the Greek word for Kingdom and means: “royal power, kingship, dominion, rule... a kingdom, the territory subject to the rule of a king.” (Strong’s Concordance). When combined as Jesus does here it means: “First in rank or number one, chief or principal in the things which we are to seek is God’s royal power, kingship, dominion, rule, the territory subject to the rule of a king.” When Jesus taught his same disciples to pray in the context of that same sermon among the first things we are to pray for is God’s kingdom to come and his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

As disciples of Jesus, then, we are to have the same passion for God’s kingdom that Jesus had. The Kingdom is to dominate our thoughts and our prayers, and should serve as the guiding force in our daily activities. When we sit down to plan out our schedules, agendas and budgets, they should center on God’s kingdom, God’s dominion, God’s rule, God’s territory. Our understanding of the Kingdom of God should come, not from our own thoughts and desires but from God’s word. How did Jesus understand the kingdom of God and what impact did that have on his life?

As a Hebrew Jesus would have, undoubtedly, had a thoroughly Hebraic understanding of the *Basileia tou Theou* (Kingdom of God). How did the Hebrew Bible (The Old Testament) demonstrate the Kingdom of God? “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. God is the creator of the earth and as the creator of the earth, the earth belongs to him. David says this very clearly in Psalm 24:



<sup>1</sup> The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it;

<sup>2</sup> for he founded it on the seas  
and established it on the waters.

Everything on the earth belongs to God. Every person on the earth belongs to God. God is the true and rightful king of the earth. David continues his Psalm:

<sup>9</sup>Lift up your heads, you gates;  
lift them up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>10</sup>Who is he, this King of glory?  
The LORD Almighty —  
he is the King of glory.



The LORD almighty (YHVH) is the King of glory. YHVH is the King and the earth and everyone on the earth belong to him, they comprise his domain, his Kingdom.

When God created his earthly Kingdom he did so with the expressed intent of sharing that Kingdom with the persons whom he created that bore his image, namely, human beings. <sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

<sup>27</sup> So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
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<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” (Genesis 1:26-28)

The Hebrew word used here *radah* means “to rule, have dominion, dominate”. God, the King was in essence sharing his dominion over his kingdom with his human creations. They ruled under the sovereign authority of YHVH the king and their dominion was over all of God’s creation. After Adam and Eve’s sinful rebellion against God’s sovereign authority, their ability to rule was deeply damaged.

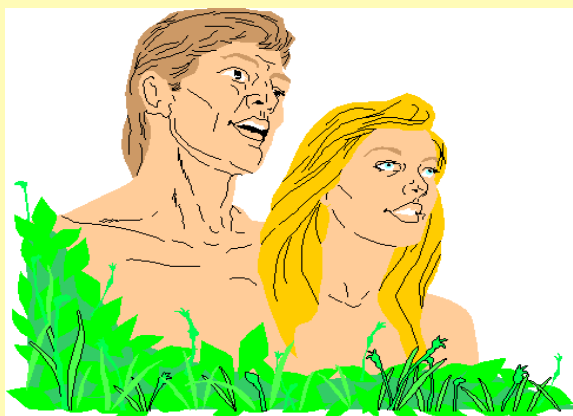
<sup>17</sup> “To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’

“Cursed is the ground because of you;  
through painful toil you will eat food from it  
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you will eat your food  
until you return to the ground,  
since from it you were taken;

for dust you are  
and to dust you will return.” Genesis 3:17-19.



No longer did the creation submit willingly to their rule. Instead, life became a great struggle ending in death. The unfolding story of the Bible demonstrates God’s plan to restore the earth to his full dominion and undo the damage to his kingdom that was introduced by sin. Contained within this Genesis 3 account a glimpse at how this would be accomplished. In the proto-evangelion of Genesis 3:15 we read:

“And I will put enmity  
between you (the serpent) and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;

he will crush your head,  
and you will strike his heel.”

Who is the offspring or seed of the woman who would crush the serpent bringing an end to sin and rebellion and restoring the kingdom ideal of the earth in submission to God’s rule? As the Hebrew scriptures unfold we discover that this person would be a descendant of Abraham:

Genesis 12:7 “The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring (seed) I will give this land.

” This is further explained/clarified by Paul in Galatians 3 “<sup>16</sup>The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ.”

From the descendants of Abraham we find that specifically this king would

come from the tribe of Judah: “<sup>10</sup>The scepter will not depart from Judah,  
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Yet even more specifically, the prophet Daniel saw a vision of this heir of David's throne: <sup>13</sup> “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. <sup>14</sup> He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13-14)

Israel was waiting for a human being who would one day crush the serpent of Genesis and restore the earth to the fullness of God's Kingdom. This human being would be a descendant of Abraham

from the tribe of Judah and the line of David the King. To him the Ancient of Days (YHVH) would grant authority, glory and sovereign power, and be given an un-destroyable kingdom.

After waiting thousands of years, this promised seed/king was finally revealed to a young unmarried Jewish girl named Miriam (Mary). "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." (Luke 1:29-33) Mary's son, Jesus would be the fulfillment of these promises surrounding the Kingdom.

Paul gives a clear explanation of how this will be fulfilled: "<sup>20</sup> But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. <sup>24</sup> Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup> For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. <sup>28</sup> When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all." (I Corinthians 15:20-28)



But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:20

At his coming Christ will reign over the earth until all of the enemies of God have been subdued. Christ the King's rule is for the purpose of abolishing all of the enemies of God from earth, including death. When he has fulfilled his kingdom mission he will restore the kingdom to God. John adds that this process will take 1,000 years or a millennium to be fulfilled "<sup>4</sup> I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years." (Revelation 20:4-6)

What is of significance here is that Christ is joined in his rule by those who have given their life for Jesus Christ. They are Christ's co-regents in his kingdom. The very purpose for which God create human beings (Genesis 1:28) will be fulfilled in this millennial kingdom. God's people will rule over the earth having authority even over the angels. "<sup>2</sup> Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!" (I Corinthians 6:2-3)

Christ's followers will reign with him in his earthly kingdom. <sup>28</sup> Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew 19:28)

John explains this further in Revelation 5 "...because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.

<sup>10</sup> You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." (vs. 9-10)

We are among those for whom Jesus was slain and by his blood have been purchased by God to be a kingdom and priests, to serve God and reign on the earth." The Bible's vision of the kingdom of God which was originally proclaimed in Genesis meets its full crescendo in Revelation as we picture those words immortalized by Handel in his Messiah

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever." (Revelation 11:15)

"Hallelujah!

For our Lord God Almighty reigns." (Revelation 19:6)

"Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:1-4)

<sup>3</sup> No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 22:3-5)

This is a picture of the kingdom hope fulfilled. God and Jesus are on their thrones on a perfectly restored earth where there is no more death and they reign forever. The Kingdom is made complete in all its glory. What a wonderful, blessed hope belongs to all who believe. Is it any wonder that

this is what we need to seek first? This is our mission to seek and proclaim this hope of the kingdom. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) Let us be about our Father's business.

You rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." (II Samuel 7:11-13).

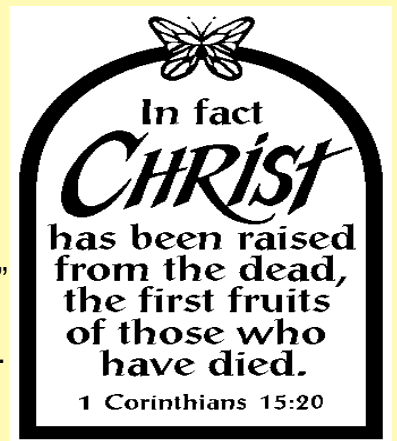


Yet even more specifically, the prophet Daniel saw a vision of this heir of David's throne: "13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13-14)

Israel was waiting for a human being who would one day crush the serpent of Genesis and restore the earth to the fullness of God's Kingdom. This human being would be a descendant of Abraham from the tribe of Judah and the line of David the King. To him the Ancient of Days (YHVH) would grant authority, glory and sovereign power, and be given an un-destroyable kingdom.

After waiting thousands of years, this promised seed/king was finally revealed to a young unmarried Jewish girl named Miriam (Mary). "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." (Luke 1:29-33) Mary's son, Jesus would be the fulfillment of these promises surrounding the Kingdom.

Paul gives a clear explanation of how this will be fulfilled: "20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all." (1 Corinthians 15:20-28)



At his coming Christ will reign over the earth until all of the enemies of God have been subdued. Christ the King's rule is for the purpose of abolishing all of the enemies of God from earth, including death. When he has fulfilled his kingdom mission he will restore the kingdom to God. John adds that this process will take 1,000 years or a millennium to be fulfilled "4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years." (Revelation 20:4-6)

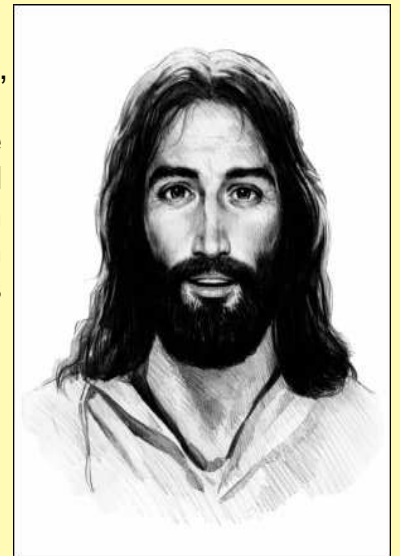
What is of significance here is that Christ is joined in his rule by those who have given their life for Jesus Christ. They are Christ's co-regents in his kingdom. The very purpose for which God create human beings (Genesis 1:28) will be fulfilled in this millennial kingdom. God's people will rule over the earth having authority even over the angels. <sup>2</sup> Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!" (I Corinthians 6:2-3)

Christ's followers will reign with him in his earthly kingdom. <sup>28</sup> Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew 19:28)

John explains this further in Revelation 5 "...because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.

<sup>10</sup> You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." (vs. 9-10)

We are among those for whom Jesus was slain and by his blood have been purchased by God to be a kingdom and priests, to serve God and reign on the earth." The Bible's vision of the kingdom of God which was originally proclaimed in Genesis meets it's full crescendo in Revelation as we picture those words immortalized by Handel in his Messiah



"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever." (Revelation 11:15)

"Hallelujah!

For our Lord God Almighty reigns." (Revelation 19:6)

"Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'" (Revelation 21:1-4)

<sup>3</sup> No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 22:3-5)

This is a picture of the kingdom hope fulfilled. God and Jesus are on their thrones on a perfectly restored earth where there is no more death and they reign forever. The Kingdom is made complete in all its glory. What a wonderful, blessed hope belongs to all who believe. Is it any wonder that this is what we need to seek first? This is our mission to seek and proclaim this hope of the kingdom. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) Let us be about our Father's business.

# FIRM FOUNDATION

By Peggy Winner

Today there are many churches, that from the outside appear to be strong,  
Yet when one takes a look on the inside, there seems to be something wrong.

From the outside these churches seem to have a firm foundation, yet from the inside they seem very weak.  
What has happened to the faithful people, who once attended and in GOD did seek?

Many no longer have Jesus as their 'firm foundation', many attend but don't know what they believe.  
What has happened to the Bible studying believers, who studied GOD'S Word: then testified to others about  
salvation they will one day receive?

Why aren't people faithful and dedicated in GOD'S service, like their forefathers who struggled to exist?  
What has happened to this generation, why are they indifferent and worshipping God they tend to resist?

The Bible foretells us that in the last days, that people won't believe in God and from the church they will fall  
away.

If our forefathers were alive to witness this happening, they would be disturbed and not know what to say.

Today peoples' lives are in such turmoil, and our nation is experiencing so much strife.  
Many deny the existence of Jehovah our creator, and ignore His design for marriage of a husband and wife

Those who don't believe in God have challenged our freedoms, and the Ten Commandments in public buildings can  
no longer be displayed.

They continually try to stifle our freedom to worship, and have passed rules that in our public schools we can no  
longer pray.

In the last days our freedom to worship, will no longer be a freedom and will be denied.  
Laws will be established by the governing powers, which will be enforced, trying to make us comply.

The end times of this world are quickly approaching, so as believers we must become strong and unite.  
We must remain faithful and firm in our foundation, so we will be able to 'fight the good fight'.

There are so many lost and dying people, so in sharing the message of salvation we must be bold.  
It is our mission to tell others of Jesus Christ and salvation, a message too important to with hold.

Dear LORD, please help us to your faithful servants, and to share this message so others will come to believe.  
We pray that we will remain faithful so we can be in Your Kingdom, and the promise you made to the faithful we  
will receive.

MATTHEW 24: 4, 5, 9, 11, 14

*"And Jesus answered and said to them, 'See to it that no one misleads you.. For many will come in my name, saying, I am the Christ, and will mislead you...Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of my name. And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many...And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come."*