

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



Lamplighter

LAMB & LION MINISTRIES
a Non-Denominational Christian Media Ministry

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PEACE

Which Passes Understanding

Lamplighter

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Observations from the Editor

By the time you read this, America's 2024 Presidential election will already be concluded. Obviously, as we've prepared this *Lamplighter* edition, we do not know definitively who the next President of the United States will be—but God does.

As I shared with volunteers at our 2024 Conference, God heard yesterday the prayers we lift up today. What I meant was this: He is not constrained by time, so when we commune with Him and voice the concerns of our hearts, He has already been at work before we utter a word. In the same way, He sees our future with perfect clarity—even though events come at us in succession as we move through the present.

When we read Scripture and see the full outworking of God's plan of salvation in Christ's First Coming, we have the blessing of hindsight. The Old Testament prophets were given glimpses of a glorious future, but otherwise "saw through a glass dimly" (1 Corinthians 13:12). Now, we can look back and recognize God keeps His promises and fulfills His prophecies. He will honor His remaining prophecies and promises as well.

In this issue, we want to help you step back from the shifting anxieties and uncertainties of the moment to stand on the Rock that is our Anchor. Our God reigns and His will will be done. If He truly is our Cornerstone, the storms of this life may bluster and blow all around us, but they will not shake us. In the words of the sons of Korah, "we will not fear" (Psalm 46:2).

The world will continue to reap the whirlwind of its own rebellion against the Lord. But those who are grounded in Christ eagerly await His upward call. We are looking forward to a city whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10). While we wait, we remain committed to serving Him in the here and now. Informed by God's prophetic revelations, we know what lies ahead—for the world and for us.

Because Jesus is ours, we have the blessed assurance of our Blessed Hope. And, we have peace that passes understanding.

Let's remind ourselves of that truth and live accordingly in the chaotic days to come.



Tim Moore
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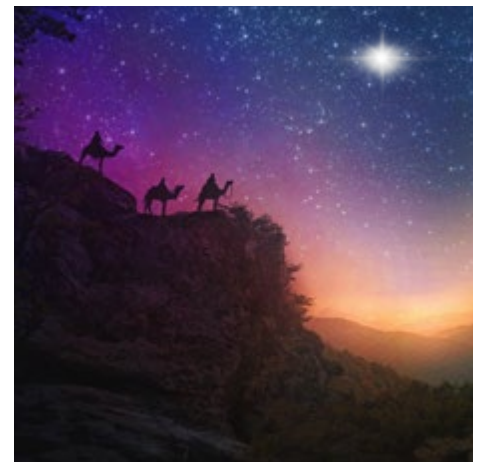
Cover: *Christ in the Storm on the Sea of Galilee*, Rembrandt (1633)



04 LIVING IN THE EYE OF THE STORM



10 ANIMALS WILL BE AT PEACE WITH MANKIND



14 LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

20 SILENT NIGHT, HOLY WAR

24 PEACE, CLEAN, ETERNAL

30 SIGNS OF THE TIMES

UPCOMING EVENTS

[CLICK HERE](#) FOR FULL EVENTS CALENDAR

NOV 7-9 **END TIME PROPHECY SUMMIT**
Legacy International Center
875 Hotel Circle South, San Diego, CA. 92108
Speakers: Nathan Jones & Dave Reagan

NOV 10-12 **INDIAN BIBLE CHURCH PROPHECY CONFERENCE**
Indian Bible Church
152 Indian Church Road, Elton, LA 70532
Speaker: Nathan Jones

DEC 9-11 **PRE-TRIB CONFERENCE**
Sheraton DFW Airport Hotel
4440 W John Carpenter Fwy Irving TX 75063

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2300 E University Dr, Denton, TX 76209

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LIVING IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

Tim Moore

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change
and though the mountains shake into the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
Though the mountains quake at its lofty pride.

Psalm 46:1-3

People living in the southeastern United States are familiar with the seasonal threat of hurricanes. Once unforeseen and unpredictable, these cataclysmic storms are now forecasted and tracked to minimize the loss of life. Still, just this fall, Helene and then Milton bore down with devastating results. Our prayers remain with people still recovering.

It is hard to fathom the destructive power of a large hurricane. NASA estimates the energy released equates to 10,000 nuclear bombs. Wind alone represents power equivalent to half the world's annual electrical generating capacity, and the energy required to evaporate and transport the moisture content would require 200 times the world's electrical output.

But at the center of a hurricane's massive swirl of turbulent clouds is what is called the eye. Ranging from five to 120 miles in diameter, this region of cloudless calm contains smooth air and clear skies—although it is surrounded by a swirling mass of destruction.





The aircraft I flew for many years continues to serve as America's designated "hurricane hunter." The C-130 "Hercules" regularly flies through the churning bands of cumulonimbus clouds to reach the eye of a named hurricane. As it does, the crew notes the storm's intensity by measuring wind velocity and air pressure. However devastating the storm may be to people and structures on land and sea, because a hurricane typically lacks lightning and hail, it poses little threat to the rugged aircraft.

Looking around at our world today, we witness catastrophic and heartbreaking destruction. Just as barometers warn of approaching storms, the Signs of the Times are shouting that we are living on borrowed time. God's prophetic Word foretells that conditions will only get worse over time.

As 2024 draws to a close in a matter of weeks, the question is: are you being battered by the gales of this life, or are you living in the eye of the storm?

Raging Seas

We have just endured another trying and troubling political whirlwind. Let's be frank: although most Evangelical Christians supported former President Trump (me included), this election cycle was more traumatic than usual.

Not only did President Trump survive multiple assassination attempts (one almost fatal), but the presumptive Democratic candidate was forced out of the race by his own party less than four months prior to the election. Even President Biden was visibly shocked by the way the Democratic Party unceremoniously dumped him. What ensued was a media lovefest for Vice President Harris—the same person dismissed as uninspiring and irrelevant as recently as July.

Who can keep up with such shifting political sands? I'm reminded of the hapless Winston Smith in George Orwell's 1984. Employed by



the oxymoronomically-named Ministry of Truth to rewrite history according to the totalitarian government's ever-shifting revisions, he found the inconsistencies incompatible with human sanity.

And yet, today, our media elites flip their narrative at a speed that would make Big Brother proud. They seem to follow the same daily talking points—even using the

same exact hackneyed words to perpetuate their propaganda. Just remember the roll-out of the word "weird" to describe Republican candidates who do not embrace gender confusion and moral insanity. But like so many other insulting leaps of illogicality, that word narrative only lasted about a week.

Raging seas are typically held back and contained by the immovable rock of great continents. But in our day and age, the very foundations of our societies are being shaken. It is as if the mountains themselves are quaking.



Quaking Mountains

Name any number of social norms from a century ago (or even 40 years ago!) and reflect on whether they are still held sacrosanct today. Crime punished and the law upheld? Not in jurisdictions led by Leftist politicians and prosecutors! Education that promotes Western civilization and encourages critical thinking? No longer tolerated in most public institutions (from pre-K to postgraduate)! Marriage limited to the covenant bond between a man and a woman? No longer acceptable! Men and women understood as distinct and determinative? No more! (Progressive Agenda)

Over the past generation, the solid ground of our moral universe has been shaken. The immovable rocks are being split apart and dashed to pieces. And, lest we think such

damage can be easily reversed, the newest generation is being indoctrinated to think such insanity is normal. The morals and boundaries of their forebears—tried and tested over the long stretch of human history—now seem unreasonable and “weird” to them.

Even as I make this assertion, I have not even addressed the outcome of this presidential election. As I write this, only God knows whether Donald Trump or Kamala Harris will ascend to the highest office in the land. I have prayed fervently that the Leftist, ungodly policies of Harris-Walz are not given free rein in Washington. But, even if Mr. Trump is victorious, the heart-breaking march toward Gomorrah will continue.



Presidential nominees Kamala Harris and Donald Trump

Our society has sown the wind for so long, that it no longer realizes it is in the midst of a whirlwind. Or, if it does, it celebrates the destruction of former norms that the whirlwind is bringing about.

So, where is the peace in such a realization? We must look elsewhere to find peace in the midst of the storm.

Darkness-Piercing Light

This time of year, it is appropriate to remember that just over two millennia ago, spiritual darkness had descended over the world. Most of the “civilized” world was rife with paganism and devoid of any recognition of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Even in Judea, the Jews were living under subjection to Roman occupation. They had endured four centuries of silence—suffering the prophesied famine “for hearing the words of the Yahweh” (Amos 8:12).

Clinging to their traditions and misled by their self-proclaimed religious leaders, the Jewish people were living in fulfillment of Amos’ dire prophecy: they were “staggering from sea-to-sea and from the north even to the east”—looking for a word of sustenance and hope from God and not finding it.

It was in this dire moment that a Great Light pierced the darkness, shining on all those who walk and live in darkness (Isaiah 9:2). But, to paraphrase Dr. Seuss’ infamous Grinch, Christ came without ribbons. He came without ribbons, He came without packages, boxes, or bags. He came without any earthly fanfare and minimal recognition. But come He did, driving darkness into eternal retreat and offering peace to mankind.

Peace, If You’ll Have It

The heavenly host who appeared before the shepherds watching their flocks near Bethlehem praised God as they bore unprecedented Good News: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased” (Luke 2:14).

Most people like to think that Jesus’ provision of peace is universal. Like Ricky Bobby, the theological-challenged character from *Talladega Nights*, they prefer the non-threatening “little baby Jesus.” Baby Jesus doesn’t expect anything from us and offers unconditional love and peace.



Certainly, the love of God is unconditional. But, as the angels sang, His peace is only for those with whom He is pleased. Far from insinuating a futile religion based on works, this simply means that the salvation that brings eternal peace is not universal. As Paul realized, some will be vessels of mercy—knowing the riches of His glory. Others will harden their hearts and reject Him. Eventually, His patience will be exhausted, and they will be consumed as vessels of wrath (Romans 9:22-24).

If you have embraced Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, you have already been identified as a vessel of mercy.

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

Luke 2:14



The storm may rage around you, but filled with the Holy Spirit your peace springs from within. And yet, we tend to be rattled even when Peace is at arm's length. We're not alone in that shortcoming.

Is Your Boat Rocking?

Matthew 8:23-27 records an instance of Jesus and His disciples setting off to cross the Sea of Galilee by boat. Worn down by the constant clamor for His attention, Jesus soon fell asleep. When a great storm arose on the sea, the disciples were sorely troubled. They eventually grew so distressed that they woke Him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!"



At the outset of this brief episode, several crucial questions arise in our minds:

1. Why was Jesus asleep in the hold of the boat?
2. Was He caught off guard by the storm, unaware that it would arise?
3. Did He lack the power to prevent or subdue the storm?
4. Did He not care about His disciples' fear and anxiety?

Thankfully, the narrative offers answers:

1. Fully man, Jesus was simply tired from the day's activity.
2. He was not caught off guard. Storms will rage in this life, but always within the constraints set by God.
3. He had the power to immediately subdue the storm with a word. Had He chosen, He could have prevented the storm as well.
4. Jesus was not careless about the disciples' fears. He did, however, express frustration at their lack of faith.

I believe Jesus was asleep in the boat because:

- ▶ He had no reason to fear the storm.
- ▶ He was the literal picture of Shalom in the midst of tension.
- ▶ He intended to demonstrate His power (at the right time).
- ▶ There was greater glory to be manifested in His calming of the storm than in preventing it in the first place.

Is a storm raging about you today? Is your boat rocking—either from the waves or from your fretting?



“Let not your heart be troubled.”

John 14:1, NKJV

Storms, raging waves, and quaking mountains are inevitable in this life, but we are promised peace that passes understanding. How do those two contradictory realities coexist?

In Me, You May Have Peace

Just before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus warned His disciples that “in the world you have tribulation” or trouble (John 16:33). That is not what they wanted to hear. It is not what any of us want to hear. And yet, I believe with all my heart that Jesus’ words were not just for the disciples gathered with Him there in Jerusalem; they are for all who take up their cross to follow Him.

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

John 16:33, NKJV

But, simultaneous with that warning, Jesus also said, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace.” What things was He referring to? The revelation of the manner and meaning of His death. The promise of His resurrection. The frank realization that His followers would live as outcasts in this world. And the guarantee of His Holy Spirit to comfort us and guide us into all truth.

Here is the key distinction: our trouble will be external; our peace will be internal. But even then, Jesus did not say, “you will have peace.” He said, “you may have peace.” Why?

I believe it is because whether we keep our eyes on Him and rise above the troubles of this life—or allow ourselves to be distracted and dismayed by the devil’s fiery darts—is up to us. Christ has given us the power to have His peace. He has given us His Holy Spirit, just as He gave Himself. But the choice to let or “**let not** your heart be troubled,” remains with you (John 14:1, NKJV).

Some will choose wisely, and some will choose poorly.

Shalom Shalom

God knew in advance who would win this Presidential election.

Faithful Christians prayed earnestly, but we also prayed that God’s will would be done. Now that the election is over, are we willing to accept that His will was done? If we do, we align ourselves with His perfect will and we will have peace. If we do not, we will be dissonant with the Lord God and our spirits will be unsettled.

As Christians, let’s manifest peace that passes understanding—even as we stand on and testify to the Truth.

Make no mistake. The prince of darkness wants to steal your joy, mute your testimony, and pulverize your peace.

Jesus came to give you abundant life and to fill your heart with peace beyond human understanding. His glory is manifested to those around you when you keep calm and carry on, resting in the assurance that He is in control, and He is coming soon.

“Keep calm and carry on” †



British poster from WWII



⇒HAPPY⇐ Thanksgiving

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 95:1

Oh come, let us sing for joy to Yahweh, let us make a loud shout to the Rock of our salvation.

Psalms 106:1

Praise Yah! Oh give thanks to Yahweh, for He is good; for His lovingkindness endures forever.

Psalms 118:1

Give thanks to Yahweh, for He is good; for His lovingkindness endures forever.

Psalms 92:1-2

It is good to give thanks to Yahweh and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning and Your faithfulness by night...

Psalms 28:7

Yahweh is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him.

Ephesians 5:19-20 NIV

Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 12:28-29

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE.

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your considerate spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:15-17

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with gratefulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

1 Chronicles 16:34

Oh give thanks to Yahweh, for He is good, For His lovingkindness endures forever.

† Unless noted otherwise, Scripture is LSB version.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS



ANIMALS WILL BE AT PEACE WITH MANKIND

Nathan Jones

The “dog-eat-dog” world of “nature red in tooth and claw” will no longer prevail... The vision of a world in which wolves and lambs, calves and lions all lie down together clearly moves beyond the possibilities of the present age. The description seems to partake of elements common to fables and fairy tales, but something else is at stake here... Judgment and promise, sin and grace are not only for humans, but their consequences, good and bad, are felt by the entire creation.

– Anonymous, “The Peaceable Kingdom”

Thanksgiving and Christmas are upon us, and for many, that means good food. Both my mother and my wife are excellent cooks, and my daughter has all the makings of becoming a great culinarian as well. Just think of all that turkey smothered in gravy, thick slices of ham, and for those of you who like to swim against the tide, lemon-soaked broiled fish.

To get my mind (and stomach) off all these delectable images, I turn my thoughts to the coming of Jesus Christ and His Millennial Kingdom...and the food we will eat then. If food is so delectable now, what will it be like during that coming golden age?

The Noahic Covenant

Before we explore this question, let’s go back in time to the beginning of eating to remind ourselves what our ancestors ate. It may surprise you!

Shortly after Noah and his family had disembarked from their great seacraft and set foot upon the soggy plains, God established the first covenant with our great-great ancestor. He ordered Noah and his descendants to “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Genesis 9:1).

But the Flood had radically changed the earth's environment, and mankind could no longer be sustained and thrive solely on a diet of fruits and vegetables. After centuries of vegetarianism, mankind would need to eat meat in order to survive the newly transformed world. And so, humanity was permitted to kill and eat animals.

The expected response from the animal kingdom quickly became apparent:

And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.

Genesis 9:2-3

God added His promise that He would never again destroy the whole earth by water. The Almighty then sealed this unconditional covenant with a beautiful reminder of His merciful peace—the rainbow. This promise is what we today call the Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9:1-17).

Nature Finally at Peace

While God will never again destroy the whole earth with water, He will nearly destroy it with His wrath during the Tribulation. As the earth teeters on the brink of extinction, the Prince of Peace will return triumphantly to restore peace to the earth. But that peace doesn't just mean between the nations. One of the many glorious aspects we can anticipate concerning the Millennium Kingdom involves a radical change in our relationship with the



animal kingdom. Nature will, at long last, be at peace with itself, as every animal will no longer live in fear of mankind, but in solidarity with us.

The prophet Isaiah described this idyllic scene:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain.

Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25

In considering this surprising passage, Professor John MacKay remarked, "An era is coming when

the animal world, in its relations with itself and with mankind, will put aside cruelty and blood-thirstiness." The terrible yet understandable fear animals have of mankind—that we will harm them for sport, hunt them for food, or by our careless violence annihilate entire species—will, after five long millennia, have passed away.



And for us people, always keeping a wary eye on so many dangerous predators lurking about, we will find only fellowship with the animal kingdom. That enmity between mankind and the animals that had been imposed by God's covenant with Noah will at long last be removed.

Even when it comes to our fear of snakes, that old curse set between humanity and the serpents will have been removed, so that even a child and the asp can live together without fear of death. I'm reminded of Edward Hicks' painting "The Peaceable Kingdom," which portrays an idyllic scene of peace, safety, and security as a human child, predator, and prey lull together peaceably on a hillside. This will be the harmonious condition of life during the Millennial Kingdom.

A Return to Vegetarianism?

When it comes to eating, what will have changed in the Millennial Kingdom compared to the world of today?

Isaiah told us that all animals will adopt a vegetarian diet once more (Isaiah 65:25). The animals will no longer eat one another but will return to the old Garden of Eden condition when edibles consisted of plants alone. That means predators will no longer spend every waking hour on the hunt, and prey will no longer warily eat and drink in anticipation of a predator's surprise attack. With no fear of aggression, predator and prey will dwell together at the watering hole without fear of one another.

This return to vegetarianism in the animal kingdom could well mean that the world's most dangerous predator—mankind—will also put aside our hunting and meat-eating and join in the vegetarian lifestyle. After all, Adam and Eve and their descendants, up until Noah, had once enjoyed a meat-free diet, and so maybe we will once again. Just like the Flood radically transformed the living requirements for all species, the world's restoration after the Tribulation could return life to what it was like before the Flood.



The Peaceable Kingdom, Edward Hicks

Whether Isaiah merely intended to convey the idea that vegetarianism would become the lifestyle of the future or not is in much debate, as theologians such as Michael Jinkins questioned whether these texts are instead meant to depict not the future peaceable behavior of wild beasts, but rather represent a "deep human longing for peace, security, safety, and justice."

In John Calvin's commentary on Isaiah 65, he noted, "The lion shall eat harmlessly, and shall no longer seek his prey" and "the serpent, satisfied with his dust, shall wrap himself in it, and shall no longer hurt by his envenomed bite." Calvin added, "All that is disordered or confused shall be restored to its proper order."

Perhaps Isaiah was presenting the ideal portrayal of creation brought together once again in perfect harmony. It could be that he was offering a vision of the coming of the restoration of peace and gentleness, when innocence and trust will no longer be abused. For example, even a little child, lacking guile or evil intent, will rule over the fiercest of God's creatures.

Seminarian Edward Wheeler took Isaiah's vision even further down the speculative hole, concluding that Isaiah was prophesying the fulfillment of mankind's millennia-old dream of a new golden age when conflict would cease; and the world, freed from suffering, pain, and alienation, would finally know true peace. Such a dream serves as a gift from God, providing us with lasting hope. Author Michael Jinkins foresaw an additional gift given by the Almighty, whereby "Creation restored to God's original vision places humanity in a radical position of freedom in the presence of God."





Literal Peace

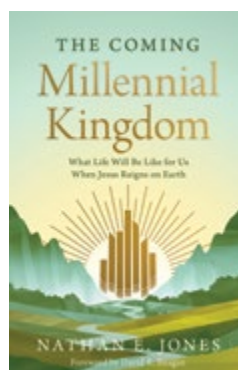
I don't find Isaiah's description of the peace between mankind and animal-kind to be merely symbolic. After all, to truly create a condition of peace, safety, and security, the threat of harm and death at the hands of an attacker must be eliminated. Trust can only arise when no fear of harm is present. Therefore, using a literal interpretation (as always), I believe the prophet Isaiah was presenting the conditions necessary for such a peaceful world to exist—animals will no longer eat other animals, nor will they attack people. Isaiah clearly took this condition literally, and at the same time, he used this imagery to convey a world that will have at last found true peace.

One gray area I ponder concerns whether mankind will return to vegetarianism during the Kingdom. For one, the Bible doesn't explicitly say that mankind will fully return to vegetarianism. It's only inferred. And two, we must deal with what the Major Prophets described as animal sacrifices being performed in the Millennial Temple. Under the Old Testament sacrificial system, the priesthood lived on the meat sacrificed. Will the new Jewish priesthood do so during this coming age?

If vegetarianism is truly our destiny, I will truly miss a thick cut of steak smothered in onions, mushrooms, and A-1 Steak Sauce™. But will our glorified bodies even need such sustenance? Probably not. But then, the resurrected Jesus ate fish, and He's our template for glorified living (Luke 24:42-43).

So, during the Millennial Kingdom, can we enjoy eating meat yet keep our peaceable condition with the animal kingdom? I don't know. I can only conclude that some elements of the Davidic Kingdom, such as what we will eat, will remain shrouded in mystery until that age arrives.

In the meantime, as we await that glorious future—and the sumptuous Marriage Supper of the Lamb—enjoy eating your Thanksgiving Day turkey and Christmas goose, and be blessed! †



To learn more about what life will be like living in the Millennial Kingdom, check out Nathan Jones' newest book, *The Coming Millennial Kingdom*, published by Harvest House Publishers in mid-2025!

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Tim Moore

*O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by:
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.*



In the long centuries since Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, a great nostalgic myth has arisen around His birth. Artists and songwriters have softened the circumstances of His arrival, presenting Bethlehem as still and silent, His delivery suite filled with cattle softly lowing, and stars circling silently overhead.

It is a scene befitting a baby's birth, with solemnity suitable for a king's nativity.

But those are not the circumstances foretold in Bible prophecy. The great passages heralding Christ's human entry into the world tell a different story, and one that has particular relevance to us today.

**“Come now, and let us reason together,” says Yahweh,
“Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.”**

Isaiah 1:18

Isaiah’s Vision

Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prophesied concerning Judah and Jerusalem during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah—all kings in Judah. Through His prophet, God’s message initially focused on the waywardness of the people of Judah and Israel:

“Come now, and let us reason together,” says Yahweh. “Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.”

Isaiah 1:18

The means of that restoration were not explicitly spelled out in Isaiah’s urgent call to repent. But simultaneous to that admonition was a promise that Judah and Jerusalem would be raised up, with Zion (“the mountain of the house of the LORD”) established as the chief of the mountains and focus of the nations’ pursuit of the Lord.

Early in Isaiah’s ministry, during the year of King Uzziah’s death, he was ushered into the throne room of God and given a holy commission. Despite his own sin and his origin among a people of unclean lips, Isaiah’s iniquity was taken away and his sin was forgiven. He was charged to “Go, and tell this people...”

Isaiah prophesied great suffering as cities and houses—and the Land itself—would be rendered utterly desolate. Mixed in with that devastating pronouncement was another promise of great hope—leading to the fulfillment of the previous guar-



antee that sins would be forgiven. But like the birth pangs that precede a baby’s arrival, that promise would be born out of great suffering for mankind—and far greater suffering for the Lord God Himself.

Hope in the Midst of War

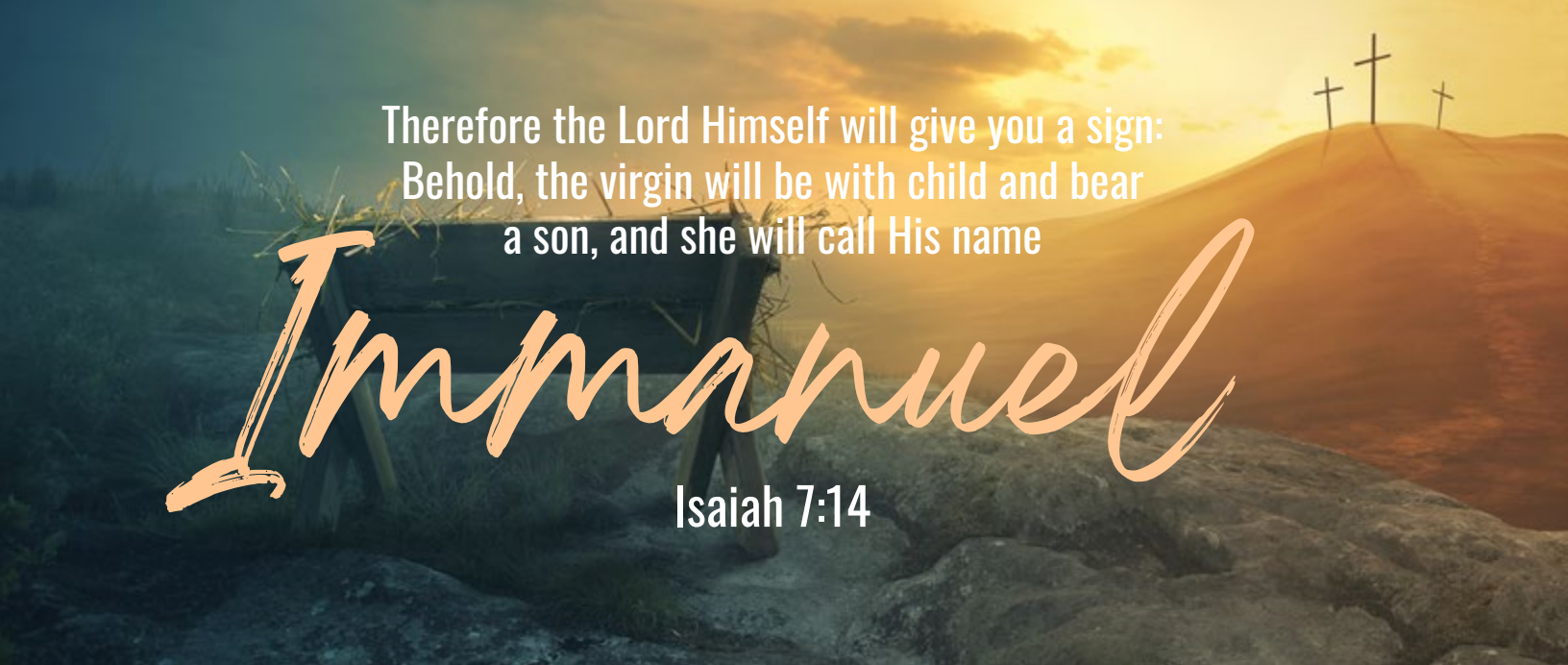
In the days of Ahaz, son of Jotham, the kings of Aram and Remaliah

rose up against Jerusalem. They lay siege to the city—one in a long series of wars that wrought destruction on Jerusalem (as they have continued to do through the modern era). Ahaz, who “did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD his God, as his father David had done” (2 Kings 16:2), was clearly given the option to choose to walk by faith. The word of the Lord to him was, “If you will not believe, you surely shall not last” (Isaiah 7:9).

God promised Ahaz that the city would be delivered and the besiegers punished. He even invited Ahaz to ask for a sign (even one as “deep as Sheol or high as heaven”) to affirm His promise. Taken at face value, Ahaz’ response seems to convey reverence for the Lord and faith in His promises. The king said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!” (Isaiah 7:12).

Yet God saw through the words and discerned the condition of Ahaz’ heart. Speaking again through His prophet, He responded, “Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well?”

Isaiah then revealed the promise that would find fulfillment in the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem: “Therefore the Lord Himself will



Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign:
Behold, the virgin will be with child and bear
a son, and she will call His name

Immanuel
Isaiah 7:14

give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). The Messianic prophecy was given in the midst of war to a king who did not really believe the Word of the Lord—in the short or long term.

Scoffers try to imply that the word translated as “virgin” merely means “maiden,” implying that the birth of this promised son could be fulfilled through non-miraculous means. They sometimes point to the son born to Isaiah and his prophetess wife in Chapter 8—before the kings of Damascus and Samaria were defeated and carried away—as the completion of the promise to Ahaz. But Isaiah’s son was named “Maher-shalal-hash-baz” (Swift is the booty, speedy is the prey), not Immanuel. The prophesied virgin’s son would not appear for almost 700 years.

Isaiah’s Other Messianic Prophecies

Isaiah revealed much more about the Messiah and the circumstances surrounding His arrival. He spoke of the grace God would pour out on the land of Zebulun and Naphtali. Although people in that territory were steeped in gloom and treated with contempt, the Coming One would make that region glorious once again (Isaiah 9:1). The prophecy even offered hope to Gentiles, as the promised light would shine on them as well.

Indeed, as Isaiah prophesied, the Light of the World would first reveal Himself in the area around Galilee: “The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them” (Isaiah 9:2, NASB).

Isaiah’s Messianic revelations were woven throughout his great book of prophecy, but he would continue to paint a picture of the scene into which the Messiah would emerge:

- ▶ He grew up...like a root out of parched ground
- ▶ He was despised and forsaken
- ▶ A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief
- ▶ He was like one from whom men hide their face
- ▶ He was despised, and we did not esteem Him
- ▶ He was oppressed and afflicted
- ▶ He was cut off from of the land of the living

All those phrases from Isaiah 53 speak of the suffering Servant. They document far in advance the condition of the world—and the world’s response to Him—when the Messiah would arrive.

The little town of Bethlehem may have been still and silent the night Jesus was born, but the world was a seething caldron, full of more fear than hope that night.

The Biblical Account of His Birth

Luke records an angelic visitation to a real and literal virgin named Mary. Not merely a young maiden about to conceive her firstborn, Mary fully understood the physical impossibility of the promise given to her: “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” (Luke 1:34).

Her question did not spring from a heart full of disbelief, but rather from perplexity over the means of such an unprecedented miracle taking place. Gabriel answered and told her that she would be overshadowed by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that her Son would be called “the Son of God.”

The implications of such a revelation are overwhelming. Mary could have expected to endure ridicule and the condemnation of her family and society upon being found pregnant before consummating her marriage with Joseph. Yet, she simply said to Gabriel, “Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done according to your word” (Luke 1:38). Mary’s response reveals her humility and submission to the will of God.

Mary would be singly honored in human history, which is why Elizabeth would later exclaim, “Blessed are you among women.” We are left to ponder the reception Mary experienced when she returned home to Nazareth after three months.

Matthew tells us that Joseph was understandably troubled about his betrothed’s condition, until an angel of the Lord revealed the miraculous nature of Mary’s pregnancy.

The subsequent details surrounding Jesus’ birth are described very succinctly in Luke, Chapter 2. Caesar Augustus ruled from Rome. Quirinius governed from Syria. Joseph and Mary traveled to Judea to register for a census according to Roman decree. (Under the omniscience of God, even tax policies can be leveraged to fulfill His prophetic Word.) Mary went into labor and gave birth while they were in Bethlehem, laying Jesus in a feed trough because there was no room for them in the Inn. The only human celebrants to the holy birth were some shepherds rounded up from the surrounding fields by angels heralding the glorious moment.

Matthew describes other aspects of the political dynamics at play. When the Magi later arrived from the East, they first came to Jeru-



salem. King Herod was troubled by their inquiries, along with all Jerusalem. The paranoid king had proven a deadly adversary to any perceived threat to his power (including his own wife and sons). And, although the Jewish religious leaders were familiar with the prophecies concerning Bethlehem, they did not bother to accompany the Wise Men the few miles to go and see for themselves—let alone worship the newborn King.

Following the visit of the Wise Men, Bethlehem experienced the fulfillment of another tragic prophecy cited by Matthew. In his rage, Herod ordered the slaughter of all the male children in the vicinity of the little town. The murder that Pharaoh had been unable to accomplish in Egypt was exacted upon the little boys of Bethlehem, bringing about the “weeping and great mourning” Jeremiah prophesied many years before.

Jesus’ very arrival into the world led to sorrow and acquainted Him with grief.

Nothing Has Changed

Why revisit the tragic background to the prophecies surrounding Jesus’ birth, and the conflicted details of His birth? Certainly, His appearance in the world represents the hinge-point of human history—so much so that we date time in terms



of BC and AD (Before Christ and Anno Domini). And even though the estimated year of his actual birth is now known to be off a bit, we still speak of 2024 as “the year of our Lord.”

But knowing that Isaiah was given his revelations in the midst of war, that other prophets foretold details about the Messiah while Israel was still straying from the Lord, that Jesus was born in a fraught moment in human history, and that the city of His birth would see further bloodshed and grief, the nature of the Messiah’s First Advent testifies that Light always overcomes darkness.

This gives us hope and encouragement as we continue to live in this dark and troubled age. The world is still wracked by war. People and nations are still straying far from Him and bloodshed and grief still plague mankind. In short, Satan still rages, and moments of stillness and hope seem few and far between. Scripture reveals that darkness will deepen once again before the glory of Christ’s Second Coming illuminates the world. Foreshadows of that Blessed Hope are contained within the prophecies of His First Advent.

Already, But Not Yet

There is something telling in Isaiah’s word to Ahaz, Gabriel’s word to Mary, and God’s still-to-be-fulfilled promises to us. The validation of the promises will be their absolute fulfillment. This is reminiscent of God’s call to Moses to lead His people out of bondage in Egypt. The LORD promised, “I will be with you” (a premonition of the Name to be given to the Messiah: Immanuel). Then He said, “and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain” (Exodus 3:12). I AM had spoken; Moses could either obey or disobey. But the proof of His calling would only be revealed after he had obeyed and seen the hand of the Lord at work.

Isaiah provided other promises surrounding the Messiah. Isaiah 9:4-5 describes the blessing that will

flow from the Messiah’s arrival. He accurately portrayed the oppression and degradation that mankind was experiencing prior to the First Advent (the “yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, the rod of their taskmaster,” the “boot of the warrior,” and the “cloak rolled in blood”). Contrast those phrases with his description of the promised Savior’s reign:

For a child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace. On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.
Isaiah 9:6-7

Reviewing the promises contained within those three verses, we see that some have been fulfilled while others have yet to be fulfilled:

- ▶ **Child born to us – FULFILLED**
- ▶ **Son given to us – FULFILLED**
- ▶ **Government on His shoulders** (meaning absolute authority and affirmed by Jesus in Matthew 28:18—“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth”) – **FULFILLED**, although He is not yet exercising His reign on the earth (as affirmed in 2 Corinthians 4:4 and Ephesians 2:2)
- ▶ **Known as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace** – Yes, Yes, Yes, and Yes; **FULFILLED**
- ▷ **No end to the increase of His government or of peace – NOT YET**
- ▷ **Reigning on the throne of David and over His kingdom – NOT YET**
- ▷ **Establishing and upholding justice and righteousness – NOT YET**



We can trust that the Second Coming will fulfill the rest of Isaiah's Messianic prophecy and usher in Christ's Millennial Kingdom. And those with eyes to see can discern that the Signs of the Times are indicating the imminence of that glorious event. The oppressive conditions described in Isaiah 9:2-5 are rising again as the world accelerates toward the Tribulation.

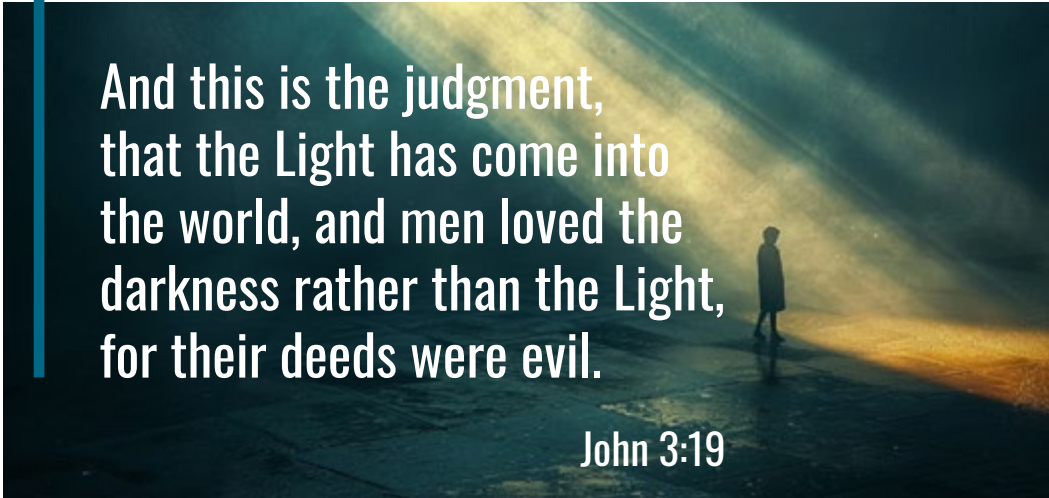
But instead of embracing the Light that has come into the world (and will soon burst forth again), Jesus said that most people will love the darkness rather than the Light, "for their deeds are evil" (John 3:19).

Turn to the Light

Given the continuing—and increasing—darkness in the world, some doubt the power of Christ. They refuse to accept that He has pierced the darkness and offers everlasting Light. Or they simply "hate the Light, and [will] not come to the Light, for fear that [their] deeds will be exposed" (John 3:20).

Satan still ensnares people by planting seeds of doubt and disbelief. He still asks, "Did God really say?..." He boldly asserts lies that contradict the Word of God and the promises of God. For instance, even today Satan has convinced many in the world that the Land of Israel does not belong to the Jews, that God's chosen people are the source of malevolence instead of a God-ordained conduit of blessing. He induces many people to insist that they have no room—and no need—for Christ in their own heart.

The good news of Christmas is that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (Paul's



And this is the judgment,
that the Light has come into
the world, and men loved the
darkness rather than the Light,
for their deeds were evil.

John 3:19

trustworthy statement and testimony from 1 Timothy 1:15). As the angels announced in the skies over Bethlehem, His everlasting peace is granted to those with whom He is pleased. How can we please God? By obeying Him and trusting in His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31).

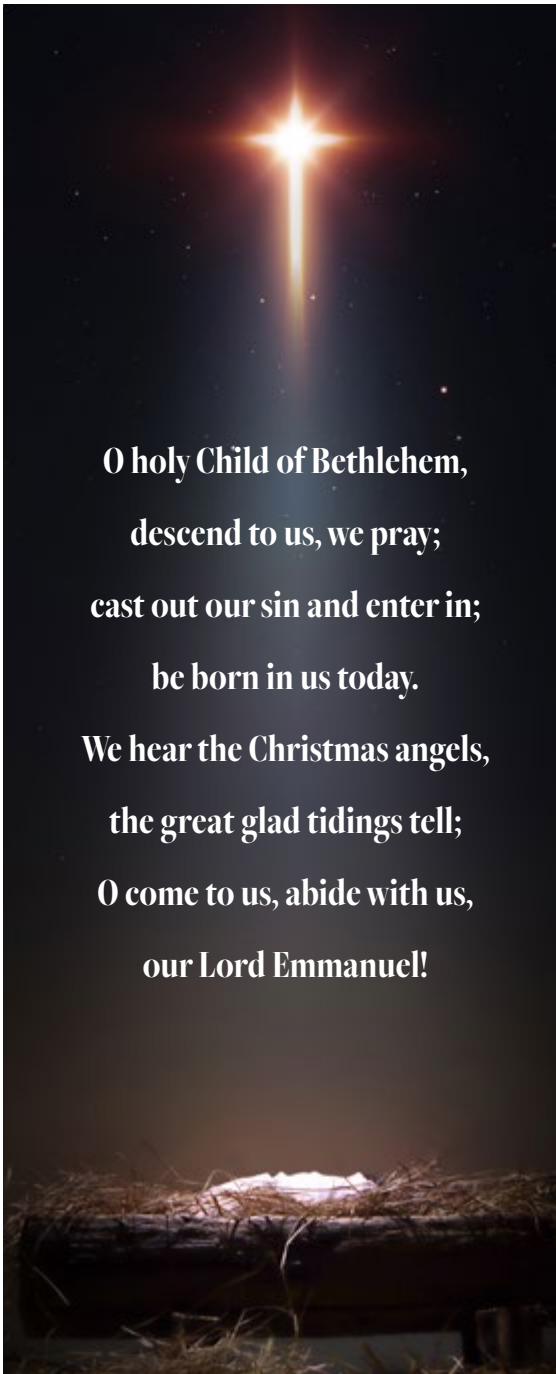
If you are walking in darkness, invite Jesus in and let the Light of Christ illuminate your heart.

Promises Yet to Come

The promises pointing to His first coming were fulfilled exactly as they were foretold. We can trust that the Lord will fulfill every promise pointing to the Rapture of the Church and His Second Coming as well. Jesus said so three times in Revelation 22.

John records that the Spirit and the bride (the Church) say, "Come." He says that the one who hears (accepts, believes, trusts) Bible prophecy will also say, "Come."

This Christmas, I hope your heart will lift up songs of praise to our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Then I hope you will join me in lifting up a three-word prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus." †



O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels,
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

SILENT NIGHT HOLY WAR

Erwin Lutzer

*Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright!
Round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace!
Sleep in heavenly peace!*

There will be no Christmas celebrations in Turkey this year.

Several years ago, Rebecca and I visited Turkey (Asia Minor), where Paul spent most of his time planting churches. It is also where the famous Seven Churches of Revelation existed, which is why we toured the country. When we visited all seven of these sites, we were dismayed at what we saw.

The Seven Churches of Asia Minor no longer exist. I am not talking about church buildings—I'm talking about congregations and the fact that there is no visible Christian presence of any kind in these cities. Small groups of Christians may

celebrate Christmas there, but they will do so quietly, in small groups of a dozen or less, keeping a low profile. In the large city of Istanbul, a few churches will be allowed to be open, but there will be no public celebrations.

Our challenge in America is not the crushing opposition of Islam (at least not yet), but rather the equally devastating commercialization of Christmas. We have diluted the message of Christmas and turned our celebration of Christ into a celebration of ourselves. We give each other gifts rather than giving gifts to the One whose birthday we honor. Today, few people understand that Christmas has something to



do with Jesus, and even fewer realize that it has to do with God's plan for redemption.

Neither the imposed silence of Islam nor the theological silence of commercialization represents the kind of "silent night" the beautiful Christmas carol celebrates.

A Beloved Carol

There's no question that it is the most widely-loved Christmas carol that has ever been written. And yet, as providence would have it, we probably would not have that carol were it not for a broken organ.



A young pastor by the name of Joseph Mohr had promised his congregation that there would be music for Christmas, though he didn't know where it would come from since the church organ was broken.

But on Christmas Eve, he went to visit a woodcutter and his wife, who were celebrating the birth of a little baby in their home. So, on the way home, thinking about the baby Jesus and looking at the village and seeing the calmness and the stillness around, Joseph Mohr wrote:

**“Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Alles schläft; einsam wacht.”**

In German the words are exquisite:

**“Silent night, holy night,
Everything is asleep.
Only loneliness
keeps watch.”**



Organist Franz Gruber added music and then spread it to other churches. Just 22 years after it was written, you have King Wilhelm of Prussia saying that “Silent Night” must be first among all the carols when they are sung in the concerts of Prussia. Today, it's been translated into 120 different languages.

We all love “Silent Night,” don't we? There's something about the virgin, the Child, and the sentimentality. We love to sing “Silent Night,” and I hope we sing it often this Christmas.

But there's something about Christmas that's troubling to me, and that is that in our society we have reduced it to the Baby and the Virgin and Joseph. We have sentimentalized it. We have also commercialized it, and of course, we have sanitized it. And in doing so, we have hollowed out the significance of Christ's First Advent, which points inevitably to His Second Coming.

What got me thinking along this line is the story of a little girl who, when she was walking along the street with her mother, looking into the window of the store, said to her mother, “Who is the baby?” And the mother said, “That's the Baby Jesus.” And she said, “Really? Why doesn't He grow up? He's the same size as last year.” That troubles me. Jesus never grows up. He's always the same size as last year.

The birth of Baby Jesus may have been at a time when nature was silent. And we love the carol because Jesus came so personally and so silently, so we sing “Silent Night.” But believe me when I tell you that in the cosmic realm, His birth elicited and began a whole series of battles, what I refer to as “Silent Night, Holy War.”

The Dragon's Fury

Revelation describes the pitched battle that erupted in the spiritual realm when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Revelation 12:1-4 says:

And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. And she was with child, and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.



The Woman and the Dragon,
by Pat Marvenko Smith

That's what was happening the night before Christmas. The dragon wanted to kill the Christ Child. Now, to understand this, realize that it was to the serpent that the statement was made by God in Genesis, 'And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. You will be able to nip the heel of the woman's seed, but the woman's seed will crush your head.' (Genesis 3:15, para.). The whole history of the Old Testament is Satan—the Dragon, the Serpent—trying to kill the seed of the woman. He thinks it's Abel, so he inspires Cain to kill Abel. Then, lo and behold, Adam and Eve have another child son they name Seth who carries on the seed. He causes the whole world to fall into a state of rebellion, lawlessness, and horrendous sexual sin, and he thinks the whole world now is corrupt. No seed! But lo and behold, there's Noah in the Ark with his family carrying along the seed. The whole world is then paganized, and he thinks, "What can God do now?" and there is Abraham being called by God to continue the seed.

Then, because he's a keen student of prophecy (there's no question about that), Satan overhears the words of the angel Gabriel to Mary:

"That which is conceived in thee is of the Holy Spirit. You shall bear a child, and He shall be called Jesus. And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father, David, and of His kingdom there shall be no end' (Luke 1:31-35, para.). And he realizes that this, at last, is indeed the promised seed.

The scene in Revelation is grotesque. It's intended to be. The woman who is about to give birth to a child represents Israel. Satan, the Dragon standing by to devour Him, inspired Herod to have all the male children two years old and younger killed in the vicinity of Bethlehem. He tried to have Jesus killed, but Jesus and His parents escape into Egypt, foiling his scheme..

Satan's Scheme

Since the devil could not destroy Him, he endeavored to distract Him. During the temptation in the wilderness, Satan said, 'Come and turn these stones into bread; satisfy your flesh. Come, bow down and worship me. Grab all the kingdoms without going to the Cross' (Luke 4:1-13, para.). That didn't work either because Jesus met him with the Word of God and repeatedly said, "It is written." So, Satan was left with trying to discredit Him..

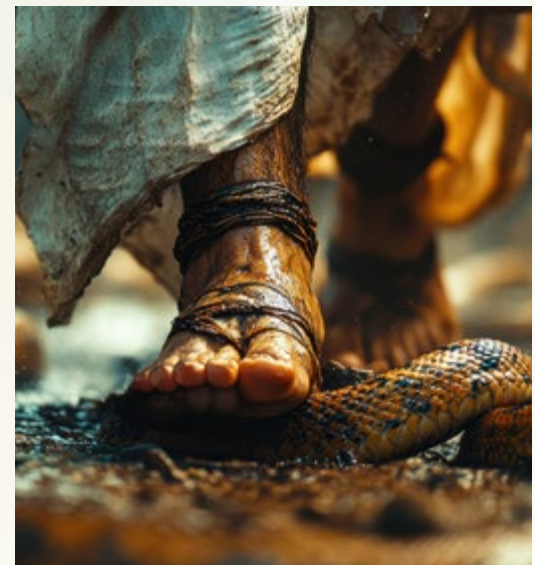
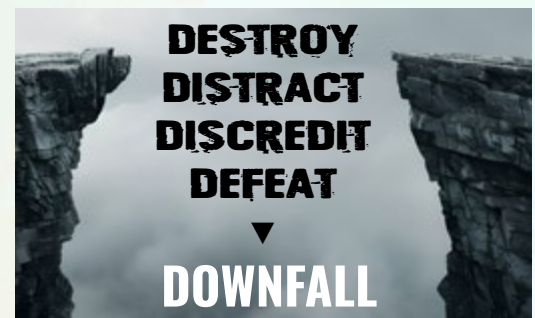
Mouthing the lies of Satan, the Pharisees tried to discredit Jesus, saying, "You are of Beelzebub, the father of demons. You are demon-possessed." When that didn't work, Satan motivated others to try to derail Him. The people in Nazareth tried to push Jesus down the brow of a hill, attempting to derail Jesus' ministry and kill Him before His time. That effort also failed.

Finally, at the Cross, Satan seemed to defeat Jesus in physical

combat." He inspired Judas to betray Him and Jesus was nailed to the Cross. His death was verified. The Dragon and all those who fell with him (and by the way, this passage tells us that a third of the angels joined Satan when he rebelled) rejoiced, exclaiming, "He's dead. He's dead. We got Him! We got Him!"

But the demonic celebration was premature because, three days later, something happened. What's a sealed tomb to the Son of God? What's a dead corpse to the Son of God? Nothing! Jesus died and was resurrected, then "He was caught up into heaven" (Luke 24:51, Acts 1:9-11).


All of that history—and Satan's downfall—is contained in those verses. Satan was defeated again! Defeated because Jesus triumphed over everything that the dragon tried to do.



The War Still Rages

So, what is Christmas all about? Silent night – holy war!

Centuries have passed. We still struggle with the Devil. The Christian Church advances, but Satan still rages and wages war on the saints. He still tries to destroy, distract, discredit, and derail. He likes to accuse us, and he even has the nerve to accuse us to God (Revelation 12:10). And what he wants to do is to make us feel utterly unworthy of God's love and beyond His forgiveness.



To cite another famous German, the great Protestant Martin Luther once told how the Devil came to him and wrote down all his sins. Luther asked, "Are you finished?" Satan replied, "No, get more paper." The Devil continued writing down the sins, and Luther asked again, "Are you finished yet?"

Satan said, "No, there's more. More paper!" After Satan had used up all the paper, Martin Luther wrote at the bottom, "Of all of these sins, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us." The Accuser slunk away, defeated.

That's *really* what Christmas is all about.

Jesus came in His First Advent as the sacrificial Lamb of God. It's not the Jesus in the manger who saves us; it's the grown-up Jesus who laid down His life on our behalf. And the heavenly peace we sing about will remain elusive until the Prince of Peace reigns upon the earth.



Anyone who welcomes you welcomes Me, and anyone who welcomes Me welcomes the One who sent Me.

Matthew 10:40

To answer the question of the little girl, "Does Jesus ever grow up?" the answer is, "Yes, He did grow up." It's not the Jesus of Bethlehem. It's the Jesus of the Cross. It's the Jesus who triumphs as God, as Savior, and as King. It's the Jesus who is coming again.

The Dawn of Redeeming Grace

So, how do we redeem Christmas from Christmas? How do we reject the mere sentimental and commercial version of the Nativity and overcome Satan's effort to destroy, distract, discredit, and derail the real meaning of Christmas?

I think we can take a note from the Wise Men. The Bible says that when they came into the house—and of course, at that time, Jesus was almost certainly over a year old—the first thing they did was to fall down and worship Him. Worship Him—that's the way to redeem Christmas.

The Bible says that after worshipping Him, they opened their treasures and gave Him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Now, my friend, we have that opportunity today. We can worship Him and give

Him gifts. You say, "We can't give gifts to Jesus." Oh, yes we can! He said these words: "If you give them to My brothers and My sisters, you have given those gifts to Me" (Matthew 25:40, para.).

And Jesus said, "Whoever I send in My Name, if you received them in My Name, you're receiving Me!" (Matthew 10:40, para.). What a wonderful way to celebrate Christmas, to give gifts recognizing that we're giving them in the Name of Jesus.

The last stanza of the song speaks of God's unfathomable love and points to the unmerited gift of salvation that would be sealed at the Cross. Let's remember that Christ's birth marked the dawning of His redeeming grace in a dark and hopeless world. And let's commit to telling others of His gift of grace that was given to us.

Let's do that, for the glory of God.

Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from
Thy holy face
With the dawn of
redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth! †



“PEACE, CLEAN, ETERNAL”

What Christmas Emblazons on Our Hearts

ROBERT J. MORGAN

During a trip to Asia a few years ago, I met a young man from an oppressive communist nation. His smile was like sunshine, and we became fast friends. Tuan’s arm bore a tattoo in Asian letters, which I asked about. He explained he’d grown up with haunting emptiness. As a teenager, Tuan’s loneliness led him to identify three things he desperately wanted, and a tattoo artist inked them onto his arm. The symbols spelled three words: peace, clean, and eternal.

He wanted a sense of peace and a feeling of being clean, and he wanted them eternally.

Tuan told me that even in this hostile nation, people watched American movies, and he had especially loved Christmas movies, which he played over and over. The music made him feel better, though he couldn’t understand the words.

After high school, Tuan traveled to Eastern Europe for university studies, and a girl invited him to a Christmas party sponsored by an Asian church. That night, he recognized the Christmas songs he knew from the movies, but now he heard them in his own language. He understood the words. In this way, he heard the Gospel message and learned about Jesus. Shortly afterward, Tuan gave his heart to Jesus, and his entire life was emblazoned with the words he so deeply desired: peace, clean, and eternal.

Today Tuan is back in his own country, facing persecution but enthusiastically sharing the story of Christmas and of the Christ who has emblazoned all his story with His love.



Prince of PEACE

PEACE

Tuan's instinctive need for inner peace is shared by us all, and that's one of the magnetic elements of Christmas. We're drawn to its message of peace. The Messiah is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6.) The angels introduced Him by proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased" (Luke 2:14, ESV). His message was called "the good news of peace through Jesus Christ — He is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36), "for he is our peace" (Eph. 2:14).

Our world has been through a turbulent year. We're reeling from societal breakdown, economic stress, and political fatigue. Rogue nations and terror organizations can strike at any moment. Our planet is suffering the birth pains that precede the return of Jesus (see Matthew 24:8). If you're like me, you're thinking, "If 2024 was so difficult, what will the coming year bring?"

I'll tell you. It will bring increasing measures of inner peace for those who know Him who said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful" (John 14:27, CSB). The nations of the world and

the conditions of the day are under His control. Guard yourself from apprehension, uneasiness, and worry. Claim the peace that Jesus claimed for you, and let the peace of Christ rule in your heart.

CLEAN

The reason we have such peace is because the Lord Jesus came to cleanse us from every sinful act, shady thought, slimy habit, and guilty thread in our lives. Recently, I realized that as I get older, I'm prone to feel guiltier. I look back with more regrets, remembering my moments of folly or failure. But while struggling with that, I read a message from Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who said, "We must never look at any sin in our past life in any way except that which leads us to praise God and to magnify His grace in Christ Jesus."

That helped me so much. Guard yourself against guilt and regret. If we ever look back with pangs of sadness and self-reproach, we're

discounting the earthly mission of Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save us from those very things — sins, sadness, and regret. The blood of Christ has cleansed all that from our lives, and our response is, "Praise the Lord, and thank You, my Savior!"

ETERNAL

Having peace and feeling clean would be of limited value without the eternal life Jesus gives us. Imagine being on the Titanic after it struck the iceberg. No matter how delicious the food in the dining room, how wonderful the orchestra, or how thick the blankets on the bed — there was no peace that night, for it was all ending so quickly. That's a parable of life without Christ.

On the other hand, the biblical promises about eternal life are like corks that plug every hole of doubt in the believer's mind. By reading the Gospel of John, for example, we become inwardly watertight,



For **God** so loved the world, that **He** gave **His** only begotten **Son**, that whoever believes in **Him** shall not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:16

shipshape, and buoyant. Just read John 3: “Everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ... The one who believes in the Son has eternal life” (vv. 15-16, 36, CSB).

My wife, Katrina, passed away in 2019 following a long battle with multiple sclerosis. After her death, I found myself putting up pictures of her throughout the house. As I walked through the rooms, looking at them, I wondered why they didn’t make me sad. Eventually, I realized they weren’t about the past but about the future. They were reminding me of our approaching reunion. I was thankful for the memories but more excited about Heaven.

Everyone deals with grief differently; we all establish different patterns of responding to loss. But every true believer in the Christ of Christmas has a glorious reunion ahead, and on that day, we shall see Him face-to-face and tell the story saved by grace. Guard yourself against endless grief and set your mind on things above.

This year, enjoy God’s three great Christmas presents that represent His love for you in Jesus Christ.

Peace.

Clean.

Eternal.

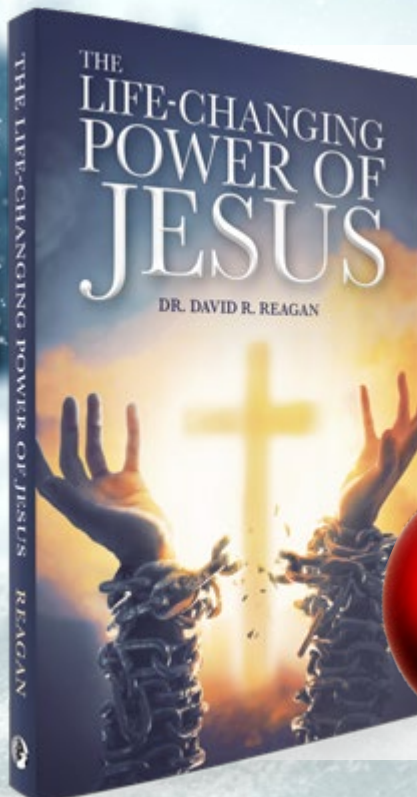
No, you don’t have to get them tattooed on your arm. But make sure they’re engraved on your heart and reflected on your face — and the Lord will bless us every one. †



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“Are You Ready?!”

By Becca Robson

“Are you ready?!?” is the question **M**any people have asked regarding all things **CHRISTMAS**, once Thanksgiving Day is past. ‘Cause life somehow moves much faster **R** after turkey’s been consumed.

And we **HAVE** to pick the **pA**ce up, lest our Christmastime be doomed!

There are trees that **N**eed “trimming,” there is baking to be done,
There are gifts piled up for **wrA**pping, since we’re gifting **EVERYONE!**
There are chestnuts to be **roasT**ed and some yearly words to rhyme...
there’s so **MUCH** we **MUST** accomplish **H**, in **SO VERY LITTLE TIME!!**

Then, we **THINK** we’re truly “**reA**dy” (having gone to great extremes) when we finish all our **DO-ING!!** But, is **THAT** what “**READY**” means?!?

I’ve a feeling that the shepherds, **C**ome that first of all Noels,
hadn’t decked their halls with **hO**lly, or heard a jingling of bells!!

I think Joseph, guiding **M**ary, “great with Child” that Silent Night,
did not “don his gay apparel” or **drE**am Christmas would be white.

Overall, it seems most like **L**y that the greatest “prep” they’d done was by trusting in God’s **pR**omise: to send forth His only Son.
They **KNEW** God would send a **SavioR**, but they knew not **HOW** or **WHEN**,
so, their **HEARTS** prepared **I**D to meet Him—they got “ready” **FROM WITHIN**.

With **THAT** thought, let’s **J**ust remember, as December rolls around
and we find ourselv**E**s succumbing to the “must-do’s” that abound...
If we’ll simply trust in **JesuS**, and submit our lives to Him,
we’ll be really, truly ready— **U**ntil **HE COMES AGAIN!!**

“Surely I am coming **S**oon.” ~ Jesus (Revelation 22:20)
MARANATHA!! COME, LORD JESUS!!



Becca Robson and her husband Greg are Prophecy Partners who live in LaGrange, KY. They have three children and attend Southeast Christian Church. She volunteers with multiple ministries and pens an annual Gospel-centered Christmas poem.

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“Look for **Christ** and you will find **Him**. And with **Him**, everything else.”

- C. S. Lewis

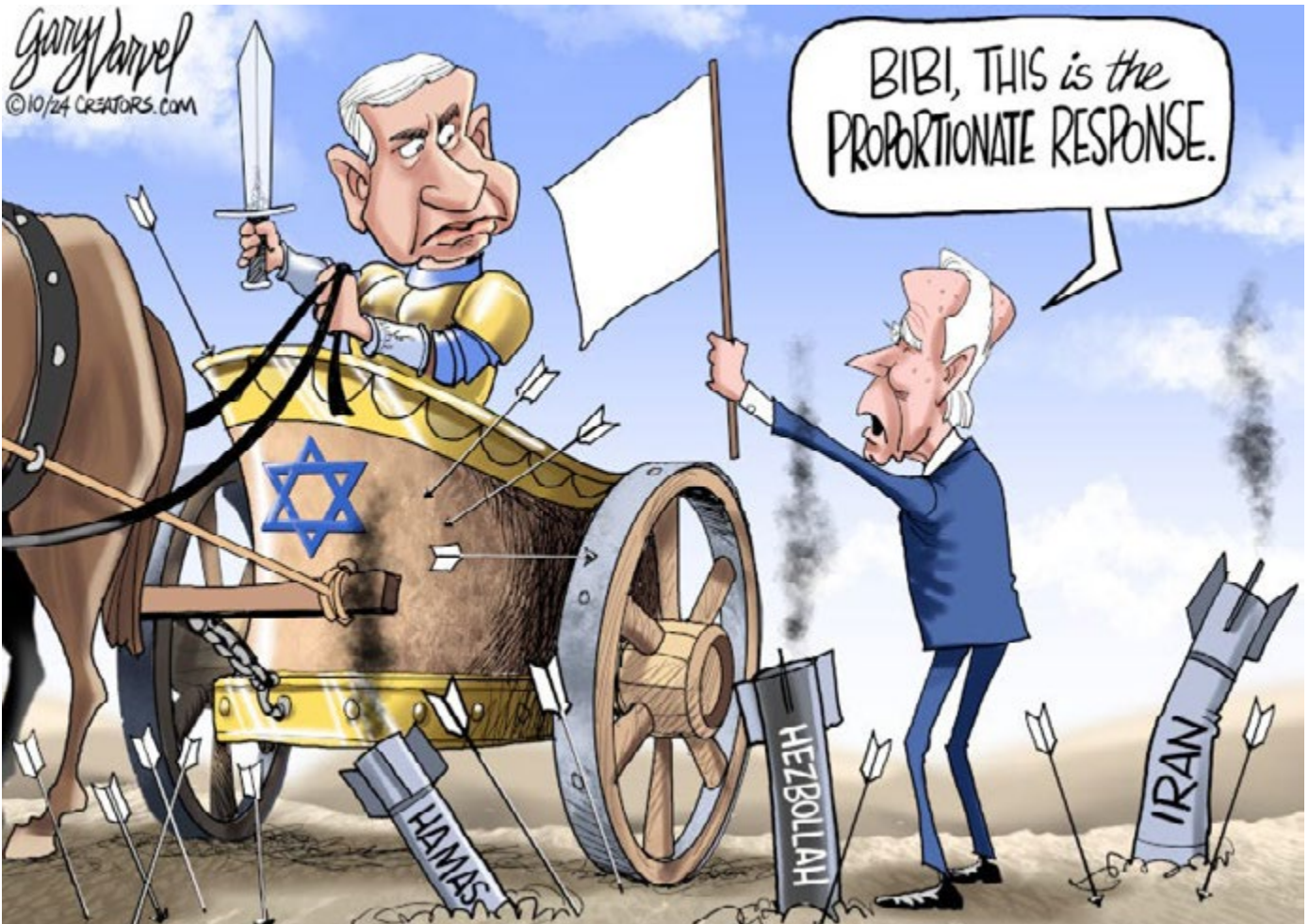
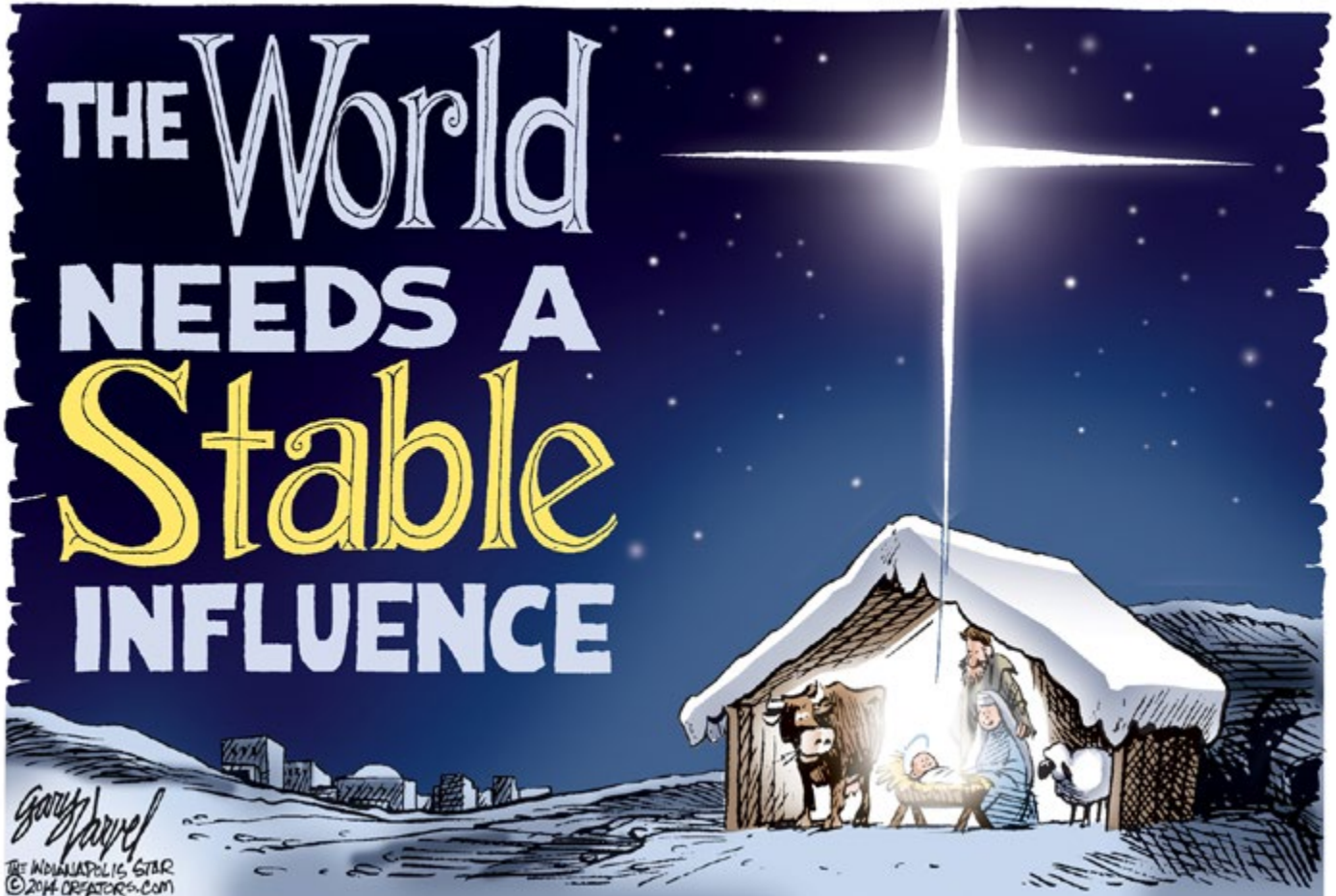


VISIT LAMBLION.COM FOR ADDITIONAL CONTENT

Much of our prophetic analysis is posted straight to our website—with regular features like our “Deep Dive with Pastor Dave” series and our weekly podcast with Nathan Jones and Vic Batista. In addition, we often have more content than will fit into a single magazine. That was the case again this month.

An article entitled “Joy Comes in the Morning” by Teaching Evangelist Dave Bowen has been posted to our website.

THE World NEEDS A Stable INFLUENCE



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Tim Moore

NATURE

Hurricane Helene formed quite rapidly in late September and unleashed torrential rains on much of the southeast. North Carolina and Tennessee experienced flooding at a level not seen in many years. Then, in October, Hurricane Milton tore a swath across central Florida.



Right now Israel is witnessing the biannual migration of over 500 million birds along one of the world's busiest flyways. Revelation 19:17-19 tells of an angel calling a great swarm of birds to feast on those who are defeated when Christ returns to earth.



SOCIETY

A threatened seaport strike demonstrated once again the frailty of the American supply chain. Experts immediately warned of impending shortages of everything from food and medicine to automobiles and high-tech equipment—a dangerous lack of resilience for a world superpower.



Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear—a rare liberal Democrat within a solidly red state—recently signed a legally questionable executive order banning so-called “conversion therapy” that seeks to dissuade confused teens from altering their gender identity.



SPIRITUAL

The number of American spiritually-confused young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender has exploded in recent years. The percentage doubles again among college students. Heavy-handed affirmation and indoctrination obviously plays a key role in this alarming trend.



In a statement that follows his pattern of sowing confusion where Scripture is clear, Pope Francis proclaimed that any hindrance to unfettered immigration is a sin on par with the murder of unborn children. No word on his intention to welcome migrants into the Vatican.



As we've emphasized throughout this edition of the Lamplighter, we can have peace which passes understanding while surrounded by chaos and turmoil. Indeed, Jesus told us this would be so. The Signs of the Times offer unwavering testimony to the veracity of His prophecy—and to the imminence of His return. In this season, may they motivate us to allow His Light to shine through us all the brighter—illuminating the path of truth and salvation for those still groping in darkness.

WORLD POLITICS

Proving itself further removed from reality and moral clarity, President Biden and his Secretary of State Anthony Blinken continue to pressure Israel to compromise in order to achieve an ill-conceived cease-fire with Hamas—the very terrorist organization sworn to their utter annihilation.



While Russia continues to threaten the West from Eastern Europe, China is quickly and loudly ramping up its own military assertiveness. Many analysts assess that Chinese President Xi is bent on bringing Taiwan to heel and expanding Chinese power throughout the world—through force if necessary.



TECHNOLOGY

Demonstrating its capability as a high-tech and cunning adversary, Israel scored a tremendous blow against the terrorists of Hezbollah when their pagers and then their walkie-talkies exploded in mass. The years-long operation to distribute these personalized bomblets stunned the world.



In a follow-up strike, Israeli Air Force fighters dropped multiple bombs capable of penetrating deep underground to eliminate Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. Israeli and Arab sources claim that he was tracked by a substance left on his hand by an Iranian working for Israel.



ISRAEL

Finally realizing that the world will not come to its aid with mounting terrorist threats multiplying around it, Israel turned its attention to Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthi rebels in Yemen—all with an eye on the head of the multi-fanged snake, Iran.



Calling on world leaders gathered at the United Nations General Assembly to denounce terrorism and stand with Israel as it battles a merciless foe, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed a half-full chamber as many nations boycotted and others (including the US) missed his speech.



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