

# UPLOOK

DECEMBER 2002

## THOSE WOMEN IN MATTHEW 1



Tamar



Rahab



Ruth



Bathsheba



GOD MANIFEST IN FLESH

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 Phone: (616) 456-9166  
 Fax: (616) 456-5522  
 Website: <http://www.uplook.org>  
 E-mail: [uplook@uplook.org](mailto:uplook@uplook.org)

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↑ C O N T E N T S

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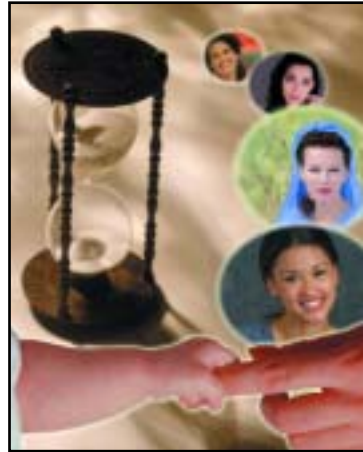
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# THOSE WOMEN

*What are they doing there in Matthew chapter 1?*



Is Matthew's genealogy any way to begin a best seller? Especially because after citing forty-two names, we notice that the last one—the subject of the biography—isn't physically related to the others! Joseph, "*as was supposed,*" is His father only in a legal sense.

Then we discover that the genealogy, being the royal line of Judah, was sabotaged by the exceedingly wicked Jechoniah. All in the line physically after him (including Joseph and his offspring) were disqualified from ruling by the curse God placed upon him. Apart from the virgin conception (Mary's line comes through David but avoids Jechoniah) there would be no hope of Judah having another ruling monarch in David's line.



On top of that, we note the exclusion of certain progenitors (e.g., Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah) and the inclusion of certain women. What are they doing there? Israel was patrilineal; the law would never have put them there (Luke's genealogy contains no women; Joseph stands in for Mary). Only grace could do such a thing.

But we may have settled the matter in our minds too quickly if we conclude that the reason they are there is because they were sinners. Sinners they were, some of the most ill-famed sinners in the Old Testament. Only Ruth of the four is untainted by personal scandal, and she was a member of the accursed Moabites. We are inclined to hurry past the story of Tamar and her star-crossed marriages, and of the darkest chapter in David's life and his adulterous affair with "*her that had been the wife of Urias.*" Even in our reading of the dramatic rescue of Rahab, we spend as little time as possible on her unseemly profession—even though the New Testament never lets us forget it, appending her name with the stinging words, "*the harlot.*"

Is there a richer reason these four are placed in the lineage of the Messiah? I think there is. After all, that they were sinners hardly distinguishes them from the other 38 names, many of whom were as notorious, if not more so. The reason, I believe, is linked with God's plan of the ages.

The first ray of hope for the recently fallen human race is found in the promise of "*the seed of the woman,*" a remarkable turn of phrase since the seed is thought to be the man's contribution. But if it was a woman who first was deceived by the devil's lie and brought the whole creation crashing down, then it would be by a woman that the Kinsman-Redeemer would come who would "*bruise the serpent's head.*" Portrayed in the cosmic battle in Revelation 12, we watch breathlessly as the great red dragon waits to devour the man child as soon as it is born...but astoundingly the woman and the child triumph in the end!

It was not a problem-free path from Eve to Mary, however. We watch with amazement as, time after time, the devil does his worst to sever the Messianic line and destroy any hope of a Saviour. Just as insidious, beside the active subterfuge of Satan, was the cavalier indifference of Judah's men. The four women mentioned had been failed by, taken advantage of, and disappointed by, the men in their lives. Each woman in this list persevered heroically, pled her case, and triumphed in the end. And in their triumph was your triumph as well, indeed the triumph of God Himself. To find their pleadings for the continuation of the Judaic line, the inclusion of Gentiles in God's salvation, a Kinsman-Redeemer for Jew and Gentile alike, and for the great son of David's right to rule, read Genesis 38:1-30; Joshua 2:1-24; 6:21-25; Ruth 1:6-18; 3:8-4:22; 1 Kings 1:5-46.

We know other noble women who, having been disappointed by what life has brought to them, did not retreat. They may have been taken advantage of, misused. But because men failed them, they tenaciously clung to the belief that God hadn't failed. They have carried on, resolute, making the best of life, and laying claim to God's promise that those who put their trust in Him in the end will not be disappointed. Along with Matthew's four, we salute them and their strategic place in the annals of the Lord.

*J. B. Nicholson*

J. B. Nicholson, Jr.



# The Promise of the King

*Peace and joy reign within when our hearts are His throne room.*

He knows our need of a king. He knows the hopeless anarchy, not only of a world, but of a heart, "without a king." Is there a more desolate cry than "We have no king"? None to reverence and love, none to obey, none to guide and protect us and rule over us, none to keep us in that truest freedom of whole-hearted loyalty. Have we not felt that we really want a strong hand over our hearts? That having our own way is not so good as another's way if only that other one to whom our hearty and entire confidence and allegiance can be and are given? Has there not been an echo in our souls of the old cry, "Give me a king!" It is a cry that nothing can still but this divine promise, "I will be thy king!"

But the promise has been given; and now if the old desolate wail of a kingless heart comes up in an hour of faithless forgetfulness, His word comes like a royal clarion, "Now, why dost thou cry out aloud? Is there no king in thee?" And then the King's gracious assurance falls with hushing power, "I will be thy King."

How glad we are that He Himself is our King! For we are so sure that He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself in this inner kingdom,

which we cannot govern at all. We are so glad to take Him at His word, and give up the government into His hands, asking Him to be our King in very deed, and to set up His throne of peace in the long disturbed and divided citadel, praying that He would bring every thought into captivity to His gentle obedience.

We have had enough of revolutions and revolts, tyrants and traitors, of lawlessness and of self-framed codes. Other lords (and oh, how many!) have had dominion over us. He has permitted us to be their servants, that now, by blessed and restful contrast, we may know His service. Now we only want "*another King, one Jesus.*" He has made us willing in the day of His power, and that was the first act of His reign, and the token that "*of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end*" in our hearts.

Lord, be Thou my King this day! Reign more absolutely in me than ever before. Let the increase of Thy government be continual and mighty in me, so that Thy name may be glorified in me now and forever.

*Reign over me, Lord Jesus!  
Oh, make my heart Thy throne!  
It shall be thine forever,  
It shall be Thine alone!*



## The Gentleness of the King's Coming

*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6*

**M**orning by morning God's great mercy of sunrise steals upon a darkened world in still self-impartation. This light has a force that has carried it across gulfs of space which the imagination staggers in trying to conceive, yet falls so gently that it does not move the petals of the sleeping flower, nor

hurt the lids of an infant's eyes, nor displace a grain of dust. So was the coming of the Gentle King, clothing all His power in tenderness, doing His work in quietness, disturbing nothing but the darkness, and with silent increase of beneficent power filling and flooding the dark earth with healing beams. —*MacLaren*

# Bethlehem the Birthplace

*Out of THEE shall come HE unto ME that is to BE ruler in Israel.*

**T***The famed “Physician of Harley Street” visited Israel in 1905, long before the land was commercialized. He has some fascinating observations, particularly the inn at Bethlehem. There are some inferences stated as fact, but he weaves a series of interesting threads together.*

The Jaffa Gate of Jerusalem is always crowded. It is the portal by which nearly every visitor enters and leaves the city, and is the highway to Bethlehem, Hebron and Egypt. We will journey from it together to the birthplace of Christ, and seek to get a mental picture of the little town and its surroundings.

Standing at the Jaffa Gate, we see stretching in front of us a broad straight road leading down the hill to a bridge. That bridge is remarkable because it is the dividing line between Judah and Benjamin.

The whole of the city of Jerusalem is in the latter territory; and across the bridge is the barren country of Judah, in which Bethlehem lies.

The road is full of life. A great crowd is passing up and down. Many men are carrying waterskins, full or empty, for down by the bridge is a celebrated fountain which supplies the whole of this part of Jerusalem with water. Those who pass down with the empty skins attract little notice, but in returning the bloated forms of the animals—full to bursting, and dripping on the dusty way—form strange and repulsive objects.

On the left half of the road are camels coming up the hill, generally three tied together in a string and led by a small black donkey, and all laden with stone for the building of new houses in and around Jerusalem.

As we pass down we see on the left hand, towering ever higher and higher, the bulwarks of Zion, thirty or forty feet high—with towers at intervals—built of large gray stones. The wall rises higher as the road descends, showing the bare rock below on which Zion is built, the two together reaching a height, as we get down to the bridge, of sixty or seventy feet above it. Then the hill of Zion ends and the way takes a sharp turn to the east and runs straight along for half a mile to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, forming the south side of Jerusalem and of the city of Zion.

Stand now for a moment on this bridge and look



Modern-day Bethlehem

Photo: Jack Hazut

around. Here, on the right hand parapet is perhaps the most remarkable fountain in the world, because it is fed by aqueducts of stone, said to be built by Solomon himself. The King's Pools, which he constructed some seven miles south in the hills of Judea, store the water which is then brought to Jerusalem. His work was destroyed, and repaired by Babylonian and Persian kings, then later on by the Saracens and Turks, and last of all by our own Royal Engineers, who have so restored the ancient conduits, that they now supply water to Jerusalem in part along the original route. But Solomon did more than supply Jerusalem with water.

If you will turn due east, you see in front of you the dark and narrow Valley of Hinnom, with, as I have said, the lofty wall of Zion running straight along the left-hand side, till at the end it takes a sharp turn north. This narrow gorge is very remarkable. First of all, it is the boundary line between Benjamin on the left and Judah on the right. Close by the bridge, near where you stand, was the place where the horrid image that Solomon erected to the god Moloch was placed, in the arms of which infants were burnt alive. Farther on are the ceaseless smoldering fires that are never quenched day or night, year after year, where all the refuse of Jerusalem is burnt—*“where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched”*—fit type of Gehenna. Beyond that, you can clearly see a low brown hill across the end of the valley. That is the Mount of

Offense for on it were built the palaces where Solomon lodged hundreds of his wives, to the great scandal of the men of Zion, who gazed at them from the battlements of the city.

Now they are all swept away, and nothing is left but the gray village of Siloam (Silwan); and below it you can see a square enclosure, which is the Pool of Siloam, where the blind man went and washed his eyes and returned seeing, at the bidding of Christ.

If you look along the right-hand side of the Hinnom Valley, the most interesting spot is at the farther end, near the Mount of Offense. That is a notable field which you see there, called to this day the Field of Blood, and the hill on which it lies is the Hill of Evil Counsel. There, on the Wednesday of Passion Week, while our Lord was resting quietly at Bethany for the last time before His betrayal and crucifixion, it is said that the scribes and Pharisees took counsel with Judas to put Him to death.

Proceeding southwards on the way to Bethlehem a hill rises in front of us, and on the left-hand side stands a stone castellated building, a monument to Christian charity, the English Ophthalmic Hospital, where all sufferers from diseases of the eye in the neighborhood come to be freely nursed and cured.

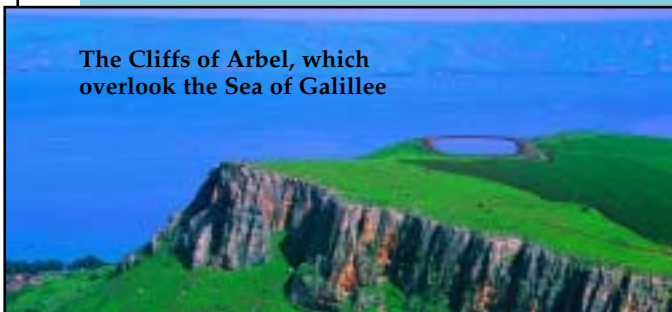
On the right-hand side are long lines of low

almshouses, built by Sir Moses Montefiore, for the relief of the indigent Jews of Jerusalem.

We now proceed rapidly down the long slope, with the white houses and towers of Bethlehem appearing over the low hills to the left. At the bottom the road forks, the left-hand branch going to the town, the other one straight on to Hebron and Egypt. Near this fork some 3600 years ago, Rachel died. Here, just at this place by the side of the road, perhaps in a tent hastily pitched, the much-loved wife died in giving birth to Benjamin. Jacob here put up a pillar, and over that pillar was put a small building, a white sepulcher, and Rachel's tomb is here to this day. There is little doubt that this is the very spot where she passed away.

Let us turn now to the left up the short hill and we come to the Western Gate of Bethlehem. By that gate is still the ancient well, more than likely the water source where David sent three mighty men through the hosts of the Philistines to draw water for him. But when they brought it, he thought it too precious to drink, and poured it out an offering before the Lord.

We proceed through Bethlehem, along the crooked, narrow, shady streets, leaving the Church of the Nativity on the left, and come to the brow of the hill. Standing on this eastern summit with the town behind us, we have in front a long valley, and from our feet a green



The Cliffs of Arbel, which overlook the Sea of Galilee

WHILE A VISIT TO  
THE LAND OF THE  
SAVIOUR'S BIRTH  
CAN BE HELPFUL

AND HEART-WARMING, I WOULD FAR  
RATHER SPEND FIVE MINUTES WHERE HE  
IS THAN A LIFETIME WHERE HE WAS!



slope leading down to it. You may not know how rare a color green is in Judea, for the country is nearly all gray

for miles around. Here it is green, like English turf. We are reminded of the pastures in this vicinity where the shepherds watched over their flocks by night the night the Lamb of God was born.

Beyond, over the gray hills of Judea, you see, some thirty miles away, the blue mountains of Moab, over which Ruth and Naomi came to glean the ears of barley in the fields outside of town, and here Ruth met Boaz. She found favor in his eyes, and you remember how he offered her marriage, as the Jewish custom was, when her nearest of kin refused to take her. Boaz then claimed the right and married the Moabitess.

Who was Boaz? He was the great Sheik of Bethlehem, the leading man there. His grandfather, Nahshon, used to carry the Standard of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and command all the hosts of Judah in the battle. The father of Boaz was called Salmon and married Rahab, who was saved alive at the siege of Jericho. Boaz was their son, a notable man, and a man of large possessions. His house is said to be a little below the gate of the city, on our left. Wherever it actually stood, there Boaz and Ruth lived together, and there Obed, their son, was born.

Would it not also have been the house where Obed married and lived and there his son Jesse was born, and there, in turn Jesse's son David was born?

David reigned seven years at Hebron and then came to Jerusalem. When he was driven out of the city by his cruel son Absalom, an old man in Gilead, seventy miles away, called Barzillai, showed him great kindness. So when David came back to Jerusalem he wanted to pay his debt of gratitude, and he sent for him and said, "Come and live with me at Jerusalem." But Barzillai said he was too old, and sent his son Chimham in his stead (2 Sam. 19:37-38). He came and was given for his own possession David's house in Bethlehem. So it became, in course of time, the house of Chimham.


It is to this house I now wish to direct your attention. This was the house of Boaz, as I have said, a little below the gate, where Boaz and Ruth lived, and their descendants, Obed, Jesse and David; and then it passed to Chimham. When he died, it appears to have become an inn or a khan. It was a usual thing for the rich man

of the district to give a khan to the village. It was considered a good act, like the giving of a hospital or a park in the present day. And this khan or inn of Bethlehem was originally the house of Chimham, and after his death it was called the Habitation or Inn of Chimham (Jer. 41:17).

Then followed the checkered history of the kings of Judah and Israel, and in later years, when Nebuchadnezzar had laid Jerusalem waste, there was just a remnant of poor people left tilling the ground under a man called Gedaliah. The chief of the people was called Johanan, and among them were two prophets; one was Jeremiah and the other was Baruch. A man called Ishmael rose up and took Jeremiah captive. Johanan rescued him with some difficulty, and then fled with some hundreds, if not thousands, of people to Egypt, leaving their afflicted country altogether. Johanan, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with him, fled down by the way of Bethlehem, where they halted at the Inn of Chimham, that being the place where they could get camels and everything necessary for the journey to Egypt.

However, like many of us, after they had made up their minds what to do, they thought it would be no harm to seek God's will in the matter, and so they asked Jeremiah if he would pray, and inquire if they should go to Egypt or not. The sequel showed, however, that they were determined to act in defiance of God's will.

Jeremiah took ten days, and at the end of that time he told them that they were not to go to Egypt, but were to return to the land whence they came. This they utterly refused to do, rejecting the counsel of God, whereupon Jeremiah said they should not see the land any more. And they did not. They went on down into Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with them, and none of them ever saw the hills of Judah again.

And now a silence falls over the Khan of Chimham the Inn of Bethlehem. We hear no more about it until 1904 years ago [at time of writing, *ed.*] when Jesus was born of Mary in the stable of that very inn. Jesus, great David's greater Son, was born in David's house, the house of Boaz, the house of Ruth. There can be little doubt of this fact to those who have not only studied the Bible generally, but pondered carefully the small allusions to the situation of the house of Boaz, and compared it with the site of the Church of the Nativity as it stands today. They agree perfectly, and it is almost certain that when you look down at the floor of the rock stable, you stand by the spot where the Saviour entered the world. 



# NEWS FROM KOREA

*A country where the Lord is working mightily.*

## **K**won Young-min from Yu-pyung Assembly (Korea) writes:

We (Yupyung Assembly and Christians Together) have visited Myanmar (formerly Burma) once every year since 1998, for about 15 days to hold a Bible Seminar. This year we visited in February and are scheduled to go again in December. There are about 100 people planning to attend. We are teaching "Church Principles." Last year due to our seminars, four new assemblies were started. Also, we are helping with their literature ministries. Last year, we provided the funds and gospel-related books to be translated into Myanmar. This year we would like to introduce the book *I Will Build My Church* and translate it into Myanmar. We seek your prayers.

## **D**oug & Ho Sook Neiswender from Seoul, Korea write:

The 11th Gospel Camp for foreigners in Korea was held Sept. 19-22 at the new meeting place for Incheon Yun Su Christian assembly. Many Chinese came to hear the gospel through Mr. Young Seng [Eternal Life] Ha, a Chinese evangelist who came from Thailand for the meetings. Meetings were held in English for other foreigners from Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Mongolia, and India. Praise the Lord for the gospel going to these people. Several Indonesians came, and in answer to prayer, 60 Indonesian Bibles were obtained to use with them. Thank the Lord and pray as many of these and others also continue to come on Sunday nights for Bible study.



## **WORD ALIVE in WINNIPEG**

Several assemblies in the Winnipeg, MB, area are again hosting the following ministry-intensive weekends, including a Youth Rally on Friday evening, an all-day seminar on Saturday and, along with the host assembly's regular Sunday morning meetings, an inter-assembly gospel meeting on Sunday evening:

January 24-26 Rob Lindsted  
Feb. 28-March 2 James McCarthy  
March 28-30 Michael Attwood

For more information or to arrange accommodations, contact:

Ron Hampton at 204-669-6026  
hampton@mts.net

## **MYRTLE BEACH CONFERENCE**

The saints at Myrtle Beach Bible Chapel (Myrtle Beach, SC) announce a weekend conference to be held Fri-

day, November 29-Sunday, December 1. Our speaker will be J. B. Nicholson (MI) who will address the theme, "Maximizing the Meetings." Friday's meeting starts at 7:00 PM.

For more information or directions, contact:

Scott Tucker at 843-650-8975

## **SKI RETREAT WEEKEND**

The Smoky Mountain Ski Weekend in Bryson City, NC, will be held January 17-20, 2003, with speaker Ken Additon (FL). A time of good fellowship and encouragement from God's Word. The cost is \$125 per person, which includes three nights' lodging, meals, lift ticket and ski rental. Contact:

Camp Living Water  
828-488-6012  
DCLW@juno.com

## **PARK OF THE PALMS**

Park of the Palms in Keystone Heights, FL is a Christian retirement community and conference center. The following is a list of the scheduled speakers for 2003:

January 18-24	Mike Attwood
January 25-31	Jamie Hull
Jan. 31-February 7	Ken Daughters
February 8-14	Fred Hartman
February 15-21	James Ayers
February 22-28	Daniel Smith
March 1-7	Alan Parks
March 8-14	Peter Colon

Conference accommodations are available as well as duplexes for sale.

For more information:

Park of the Palms  
706 Palms Circle  
Keystone Heights, FL 32656-8016  
Phone: 352-473-4926  
E-mail: pop@techcomm.net



**50th ANNIVERSARY**

The saints of Bethany Chapel, Winchester, ON, are planning to celebrate their 50th year of the Lord's faithful blessings. They invite all who have shared with them in this work to attend and recount your memories. They plan to gather to give God praise Saturday evening, February 1, 2003 and during an open-house on Sunday afternoon, February 2, 2003. For further information or if unable to attend, please share your anecdotes with: Stephen MacDonald at 613-984-2722

Malcolm Clark 613-821-287 or malcolmaclark@hotmail.com

**HOLIDAY CONFERENCE**

The saints at Holiday Gospel Assembly are happy to announce their annual Winter Bible Conference to be held on February 21 and 22, 2003 in Holiday, FL.

In the will of the Lord, speakers expected are: J. B. Nicholson Jr. (MI) and Bill Gustafson (GA). The theme of the conference will be "Believers in a Changing World." The confer-

ence will convene on Friday evening from 7:30 to 9:00 PM and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Dinner will be served at noon on Saturday.

For further information, contact: Lee Cappiello at 727-8454572 email: elijacap@innet.com

Pray that the conference will be a blessing for those attending and that there will be a harvest of precious souls won to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**WORKERS' & ELDERS' CONF.**

The Ontario Workers' and Elders' conference is scheduled to be held May 6 through 8 at Scottlea Bible Chapel in St. Catharines, ON. The invited speakers are Don Norbie (CO) and Steve Hulshizer (PA). All are welcome to attend. You might consider coming as a group from your local assembly. Encourage young men to attend. Contact Patrick Long at: pbl@msc.on.ca

**STUDIES in JOHN**

Monthly Bible Studies on the Gospel of John will be held at Hope-dale Bible Chapel (342 Sherin Dr.,

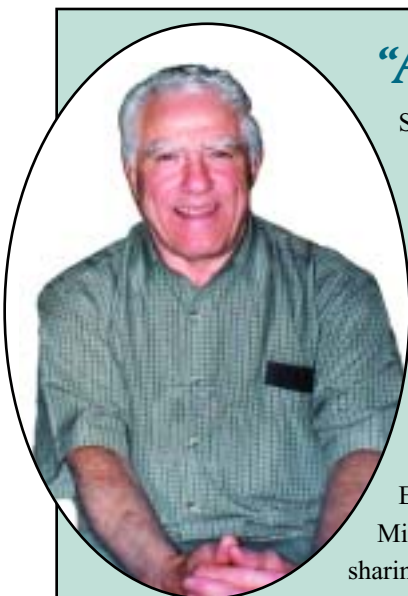
Oakville) 9:00 until noon. Below is a list of dates, topics and speakers:

December 14	Signs in John <i>Wm. Burnett</i>
January 18	Discourses in John <i>Brian Gunning</i>
February 15	Upper Room Ministry <i>Randy Amos</i>
March 15	Crucifixion Scenes <i>Jim Paul</i>
April 12	Post-Resurrection Appearances W. H. Burnett 905-634-6345 wh.burnett@sympatico.ca Tapes are available from: hw.allison @sympatico.ca

**VESSELS OF HONOR 2003**

A Young Adult's Conference convened by East Tulsa Bible Chapel is scheduled to be held on the campus of Baker University, Baldwin City, Kansas, May 23-26, 2003.

The theme for Vessels of Honor 2003 will be "Broken Vessels." General session speakers are: David Dunlap, Warren Henderson and Harold Summers. Seminar speakers, along with the general session speakers,

**"A Prince and a Great Man is Fallen"**

So spoke David at the death of Abner (2 Sam. 3:38) and so it could be said of Ernie Sarlo (1932–2002). Born in Sault Ste. Marie, ON, and born again there in 1951, Ernie from his earliest days as a believer shared the gospel graciously and directly with others. He taught Sunday School, preached in the open air, and ministered to inmates in the local jail. He was a respected brother in the local assembly.

After his retirement from secular employment at the age of 55, he became a well-appreciated minister of the Word in assemblies across Ontario. Always a bridge-builder, Ernie went where he was invited and taught clearly and graciously, obedient to the injunction, "*Observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality*" (1 Tim. 5:21). He will be missed.

Ernie went Home after a short bout with cancer. He was predeceased by his wife, Mickey. The funeral was taken by Mr. Aubrey Dellandrea, with Mr. David Nicholson sharing at the graveside. Please uphold the children and grandchildren in prayer.

## Asia Outreach

For the adventure of a lifetime while fulfilling life's greatest purpose, consider joining or financially supporting a group of committed people as they travel and backpack into a remote region of S.E. Asia next year to distribute the Word. "That Thy way may be known upon earth, your salvation among all nations" (Ps. 67:2). Brethren, Pray for us!

For info, contact Ross McIntee at [rjmccintee@juno.com](mailto:rjmccintee@juno.com)

In the U. S.:

Crossroads Bible Fellowship  
63 New London Rd.,  
Pittsford, NY 14584  
Phone: (585) 429- 6299

In Canada:

Thorold South Gospel Chapel  
c/o 195 Woodside Drive  
St. Catharines, ON L2T 1X8  
Phone: (905) 684- 6772



Gifts should be made out to the above assemblies, earmarked "for Asia Outreach." A tax deductible receipt will be provided.

will be Craig Rolinger, Nancy Rolinger, Bill Wortman, Keith Trevolt, and Steve Price. Contact:

Jim Lindamood at 918-663-1121  
[jimlindamood@vesselsofhonor.org](mailto:jimlindamood@vesselsofhonor.org)  
Dan Moffitt at 918-744-6484  
[danmoffitt@juno.com](mailto:danmoffitt@juno.com)

### NEW ASSEMBLIES

#### Tracy, California

Three families and several individuals have seen the establishment of an assembly of believers in the city of Tracy, CA. The story of its beginnings is a testimony of the Lord's miraculous dealings with those whom He loves. The meetings take place in the homes of the believers in Tracy, and are usually from 10:00 AM until about 1:00 PM. The Lord's Supper begins at 10:00, and after a fellowship break, they have a Bible study until closing. Please feel free to visit at anytime. Contact:

Blaine Van Ausdell  
209-832-9822  
Terry Wilson  
209-830-0708  
[lillyct@pacbell.net](mailto:lillyct@pacbell.net).

They request the prayers of the saints as they seek the Lord's direction in continuing His work in Tracy.

#### Northeast Georgia

Lake Lanier Bible Chapel is a group of believers meeting together in northeast Georgia. Several families started meeting in homes last winter and with the addition of some new families, they have outgrown their homes and currently meet Sundays in a Holiday Inn Express Meeting Room. They meet Sunday mornings at 10 AM for Breaking of Bread and Family Bible Hour and also on Wednesday evenings at 7 PM for prayer and Bible study.

For more information or directions, please contact:

Ross McCulloch at 678-482-6616  
[culloch@juno.com](mailto:culloch@juno.com) or  
Dale Hamilton at 678/513-1148  
[dshamilton62@hotmail.com](mailto:dshamilton62@hotmail.com)

### COMMENDATIONS

#### Robert and Cindy Brennan

The elders with the saints gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ at West Heights Gospel Chapel in West Heights, BC, hereby commend to the work, service, and ministry of the Lord, our brother and sister Robert and Cindy Brennan. Robert has been active in the assembly in ministering the Word locally and

elsewhere, also in Sunday School and children's and young people's meetings. We commend them to the grace of God for His leading as and where He will be pleased to use them. We appreciate your prayers for them.

### SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

#### West Woods Christian Academy

West Woods Christian Academy in Hamden, CT, is seeking a Headmaster for the K-12, 150-student school. This ministry of West Woods Bible Chapel serves families from all the surrounding towns and numerous Bible-believing churches.

The applicant must be mature in his relationship with the Lord and have a Masters degree in Christian School Administration. Teaching and Administrative experience is desired. The applicant must be able to oversee and inspire the spiritual climate and pulse of the school and promote fidelity to the school's Christian philosophy of education.

Apply to the school board at:  
West Woods Christian Academy  
2105 State St.  
Hamden, CT 06517  
Fax: 203-786-4730  
Phone: 203-562-9922

# The Virgin Birth

*Two angelic messages, two recipients, two recorders.*

It is fascinating to note that two celestial messengers transmitted two sets of information to two people—Mary and Joseph—and were recorded by two authors, Luke and Matthew. Instead of attesting the copy, therefore, in the mouth of only two witnesses, we may be certain that the account of the virgin birth is nothing but the unvarnished truth of God's Word.

What are those facts? To Mary, Gabriel said:

1) Jesus will be conceived by the Holy Ghost.

2) He will be virgin-born, for no one knew her physical conditions as did God and she herself.

3) He would be called the Son of God.

4) He was to be the King of Israel: *"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end"* (Lk. 1:32-33). These were the happy words of Gabriel to the believing heart of a Jewish virgin. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary. God become man, the King of the Jews.

To Joseph, the angel said:

1) Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost.

2) He will be virgin-born.

3) *"They shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us"* (Mt. 1:23).

4) He would be the Redeemer, *"for He shall save His people from their sins."* These were the words of *"an angel of the Lord"* to a perturbed husband. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, God become man, the Redeemer of the world.

How truly wonderful it is that from His throne in glory God should condescend to convey this double stream of information about His Son, through two angels, through two people, through two writers. The more precious is it that He should preserve this fund of knowledge intact for us through almost two thousand



years. Two sets of four characteristics, similar in three respects, by three groups of double witnesses. Surely no one can lightly disregard all this as so much imagination, foolish expressions from hyperactive minds.

The remaining characteristics embody the whole purpose of God's plan for the world, and can be very concisely stated in two words: Saviour, and King.

GENTILE WISE MEN WORSHIPED THE KING

It is evident from the context of the prophecy that fell from the lips of Gabriel that when Jesus was born He would come a King. He was to have a kingdom, and was to be the kingdom's King. When the wise men came to Jerusalem and paid Herod a visit, they asked him, *"Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"*

The nation of Israel had possessed the ancient prophecy of Micah for more than seven hundred years. By it the people knew very well that their Messiah would come to be their King, and the place of His birth had even been located for them. *"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting"* (5:2).

Isaiah had told his people long before Micah wrote, that *"the government shall be upon His shoulder"*; *"Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever"* (Isa. 9:6-7). Whether the wise men knew anything about this prophecy, we do not know. They are looked upon as having been descendants of the people by whom Daniel and his countrymen had been taken and held captive. The Easterners may have learned something about the Promised One from him and his companions while they were held in captivity in Babylon. In turn, the information could have been transmitted by word

of mouth to each succeeding generation of Magi.

Because of the activities of these men—Daniel and his friends—as well as others no doubt, and as a result of their zeal for the living God and His Word, many of the Babylonians must have come to know something about the spiritual things in which they were interested. We feel certain that since Nebuchadnezzar “*blessed the most High, and praised and honored Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation*” (Dan. 4:34, 37), if he thought it proper to “*extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment,*” then many of his subjects would likewise learn something about “*the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.*” It seems reasonable, moreover, to expect them to be acquainted with the prophecies concerning the coming of Israel’s Messiah and King. They may have become familiar with the Old Testament prophecy, “*There shall come a Star out of Jacob*” (Num. 24:17).

The wise men who came in search of the King had asked a question which startled Herod and all Jerusalem out of their complacency. In the same breath they made a rather significant statement, one that implied previous knowledge of the One whom they had come to find. They said, “*We have seen His star in the East.*” However much or little they may have known about Him, the fact remains that they were convinced that a boy was living somewhere in the vicinity of Jerusalem who was destined to be the King of the Jews.

These Gentiles had made a long and arduous journey in order to visit this King. They knew something about His deity, for when they found Him they worshiped Him. They also recognized Him as worthy of the treasures they had carried from afar. It must have been a moment of ecstasy for them not only to find Him but also to place before Him the gifts befitting so noble a character.

#### PREJUDICED COUNTRYMEN REJECTED THE KING

The entire Gospel of Matthew presents the kingly aspect of Christ and was dictated by the Holy Spirit to convince the Jews that He was their King. When He rode into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass, “*some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto Him, Master, rebuke Thy disciples*” (Lk. 19:39). His prompt and pointed reply demonstrated the inevitableness of that particular situation. “*I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately*

*cry out*” (Lk. 19:40). Why? Simply because He had ridden into Jerusalem that day as a literal fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, and His enemies knew it.

He had presented Himself at the beginning of His ministry in the synagogue in His home town of Nazareth as the people’s Messiah. He presented Himself again publicly at the end of His ministry as the Messiah of Israel, and the King of the Jews as well. The populace in Jerusalem understood precisely the challenge that now confronted them, “*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass*” (Zech. 9:9) must have flashed through their perverse and bigoted minds. This Jesus was undeniably the King of the Jews, and “*His own*” were aware of it, but were not willing to admit it.

One of the incidents that bears out this thought is recorded by John. Pilate had written the superscription “*JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS,*” and put it on the cross. The chief priests asked him to change it, and make it read, “*He said, I am King of the Jews.*” But Pilate refused, and when Jesus died the superscription announced to all who could read Hebrew, Greek, or Latin that the agonizing form on the middle cross was none other than the King of the Jews.

#### A HAUGHTY GOVERNOR QUESTIONED THE KING

But let us ask, where did Pilate get the idea of designating Jesus as the King of the Jews? The answer is to be found in the initial charge that he heard from the Lord’s accusers when He was brought to him. They said, “*We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King*” (Lk. 23:2). It seems that the one phrase of the multitude’s varied accusations that made the deepest impression on Pilate was the reference to His Kingship. He hastened to ask Him, “*Art Thou the King of the Jews?*” It is quite probable that the Holy Spirit desires to impress upon us also the supreme importance of the question that was foremost in the mind of Pilate; for He caused each of the Gospel writers to record it, using exactly the same wording in each case.

The reply that Jesus gave was sufficiently clear to convince not only the governor but the Romans gathered in the judgment hall of the majesty of His claims. “*Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born,*





*and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice."*

Pilate soon found himself facing the howling, angry mob that was clamoring for the death of Jesus. In his attempt to appease the multitude, he asked, "Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" Some time later, again standing before the same crowd, he said, "Behold your King." At the same time he made one final effort to pacify the enemies of Jesus, and arouse in them an attitude of sympathy toward Him when he asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?"

#### RELIABLE WITNESSES

The following array of witnesses are unanimous in according Kingship to our beloved Lord: Jacob predicted it; David emphasized it; Micah reechoed it; Gabriel confirmed it; Nathaniel and others believed it; the crowds accompanying Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem proclaimed it; Pilate acknowledged it; and the superscription published it.

#### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Why do we lay so much stress on the kingly claim of Jesus? If we can show that this claim was altogether valid, we can establish a bit of evidence which will completely dispel any possibility that He might have been an illegitimate son. If that were His state in life He could never have been recognized as the King of the Jews, neither could He ever hope to realize such a high place in the history of the world when He returns to earth again to establish His millennial reign; and if He cannot serve in the capacity of Israel's King, then He cannot be King for anyone else. In that event, the probability of His ruling the earth in equity and peace, from Jerusalem as the political and ecclesiastical center of the world, is certainly very remote indeed.

In that wonderful event, however, lies the solution of this old world's perplexing problems, including the great question of peace. When He comes in majesty and splendor, with great power and glory, He will be accepted and acclaimed as the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

His Kingship must be definitely ascribed to His virgin birth, while on the other hand, His virgin birth implied His Kingship. Once more we have but to

invoke the Mosaic law to determine just how trustworthy a statement like this may be. For "a bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord." In other words, an illegitimate son could never hope to become a magistrate or a judge, much less a priest or king in Israel. The expression, "shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord," stood between him and whatever aspirations he might have cherished for himself and prevented his ever holding public office, either civil or religious.

With Jesus, however, it was not a question of presumption and vain ambition. Soon after He began His ministry, He substantiated His claims to Messiahship and later to Kingship over Israel. When He did so, He left no doubt in the minds of the people as to His long foretold identity, although He was hated the more for it, since He definitely proved every one of His claims to be altogether sound. It is quite evident, then, in light of the Old Testament passage just mentioned as a commentary on His birth, that there can be no question whatsoever about the legitimacy of it.

When we honestly consider all the conditions that it involves, the only position left for us to take is to acknowledge His unshaken integrity as the virgin-born Son of God; and it becomes a comparatively simple matter for us to understand the correlation between His Kingship and His virgin birth. They stand together.

The Word of God is quite specific about the priestly function that the Lord Jesus Christ now exercises in heaven. "For such an high priest became us, who is holy harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26). "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). These references by no means exhaust the list that the Word supplies concerning His priesthood, a priesthood which has been established not on the Aaronic order, but according to the order of Melchisedek, continually untransmissible, forever. Passages about this phase of Christ's present office occur again and again, each shouting its commendation of the virgin-born One who serves continually as the High Priest of those who have been born again.

"He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." ☪

# LOVE



Who gave his only son  
to let us go to Heaven,  
God. He sent Jesus Christ  
to save us from going to  
Hell. Jesus died for us so  
we can go to Heaven.  
He didn't have to but  
he wanted to. That's why  
he loves us more than the  
stars.

Jesus saved a lot of  
people from going to hell.  
If Jesus Christ didn't  
come down to earth and  
sacrificed himself, then we  
all would not go to heaven.

We would go to hell.  
Jesus was ~~strade~~ before  
soldiers took him away, he could  
hid somewhere but he stayed.  
People laughed at him,  
played fun of him, and his  
last words were kind of

like this: "My work is  
finished. Then, he died. So that  
means he is our Savior.  
Jesus Christ

He is love.

When 10-year-old Jordan Keiter (from California) asked his mother if he could write an article for *Uplook Magazine*, she agreed to send it to us—leaving in the Lord's hands what we did with it. We think you'll be encouraged, as we were, by Jordan's interest in this ministry and by his clear expression of the reason why Jesus came anyway.

# GOD MANIFEST IN FLESH

*“He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.”*

**T** *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*  
*Philippians 2:5-11*

\*  
\*  
\*  
*Ere the blue heavens were stretched abroad,  
 From everlasting was the Word;  
 With God He was; the Word was God;  
 And must divinely be adored.*

*By His own power were all things made;  
 By Him supported all things stand;  
 He is the whole creation's Head,  
 And angels fly at His command.*

*Ere sin was born, or Satan fell,  
 He led the host of morning stars  
 Thy generation who can tell,  
 Or count the number of Thy years?*

*But lo! He leaves those heavenly forms  
 The Word descends and dwells in clay,  
 That He may hold converse with worms,  
 Dressed in such feeble flesh as they.*

*Mortals with joy behold His face,  
 The eternal Father's only Son ;  
 Full of truth! how full of grace  
 When through His eyes the Godhead shone.*

*Bless'd angels leave their high abode,  
 To learn new mysteries here, and tell  
 The loves of our descending God,  
 The glories of Immanuel.*



Sadhu Sundar Singh used to illustrate the incarnation mystery in this way: A simple countryman was being shown a red glass bottle full of milk. They asked him what was in the bottle. “Wine? Brandy? Whisky?” he replied, questioningly. He could not believe it was filled with milk till he saw the milk poured out from it. The redness of the bottle hid the color of the milk. So, he said, it was and is with our Lord’s humanity. Man saw Him tired, hungry, suffering, weeping and thought He was only man. “*He was made in the likeness of men,*” yet He ever is “*God over all, blessed for ever.*”

Jesus’ coming is the final and unanswerable proof that God cares. —Wm. Barclay

**The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John 1:14**



# “The SCRIPTURES...are they

P R O P H E S I E S   C O N C E R N I N G   T H E   C O M I N G

## Prophecy about the coming “seed of the woman”:

- “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15).

- “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise...Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost” (Mt 1:18).

## Prophecy about the coming seed of Abraham:

- “The Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land...” (Gen. 12:7).

- “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith...And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. 3:16).

## Prophecy about the coming seed of David:

- “Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David,...I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom” (2 Sam. 7:8, 12).

- “...the gospel of God... concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:1-3).

## Prophecy about the virgin conception of the Messiah:

- “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel...For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...” (Isa. 7:14; 9:6).

### Fulfillment:

- “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son...Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Lk 1:31, 34-35).

## Prophecies about the fore-runner of the Saviour:

- “Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me...” (Mal. 3:1).
- “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isa. 40:3).

### Fulfillment:

- “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight” (Mt. 3:1-3).
- “He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias” (Jn. 1:23).
- “This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee” (Lk. 7:27).

## Prophecies about the time of the Saviour’s birth:

- “...the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple...” (Mal. 3:1). *The Lord Jesus had to come between the rebuilding of the temple and its destruction in AD 70.*
- “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks...And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself...” (Dan. 9:25-26). *The Lord Jesus had to come 483 years after the dedication of the altar, described in Ezra 3.*

### Fulfillment:

- “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4).
- “They found [Jesus] in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors...” (Lk. 2:46).
- “And Jesus went into the temple of God...” (Mt. 21:12).
- “They shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation” (Lk. 19:44).





# which TESTIFY of ME” Jn. 5:39

OF THE LORD JESUS INTO THE WORLD

## Prophecies about the place of the Saviour's birth:

- “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).
- “I...called My son out of Egypt” (Hos. 11:1).
- “...by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined” (Isa. 9:1-2).
- “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch [a play on the word for Nazarene] shall grow out of his roots” (Isa. 11:1).

## Fulfillment:

- “Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea...” (Mt. 2:1).
- “When he arose, he took the young child and His mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My son” (Mt. 2:14-15).
- “He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene” (Mt. 2:23).

## Prophecies about the names and titles given at His birth:

- *Called Jesus*: “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation [Heb., *Yeshua*, or Gk., *Jesus*]” (Isa. 12:2).
- *Called Christ (Anointed)*: “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows” (Ps. 45:7; see Heb. 1:9).
- *Called Lord*: “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool” (Ps. 110:1).
- *Called Emmanuel (God with us)*: “A virgin shall...bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14).

## Fulfillments:

- “...call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Mt. 1:21).
- “Unto you is born this day... a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Lk. 2:11).
- “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:16).
- “Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am” (Jn. 13:13).
- “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord...they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Mt. 1:22-23).

## The coming of Christ to fulfill the Old Covenant with its claims, and to lay the basis for the New:

### *In answer to the Mosaic law:*

- “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill” (Mt. 5:17).
- “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory)...For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (Jn. 1:14, 17).
- “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law...” (Gal. 4:4-5).

### *In answer to Adam's sin:*

- “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous” (Rom. 5:18-19).
- Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit...” (Gal. 3:13-14).

### *In answer to the promises made to the patriarchs:*

- “...Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. 15:8).

### *In answer to uniting Jews and Gentiles:*

- “Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments...for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh” (Eph. 2:15-17).

### *In the completion of God's communication to man:*

- “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds” (Heb. 1:1-2).

# Bush Signs Bill on “God References”

*President declares that we are still “one nation under God.”*

President Bush signed a bill on November 13 reaffirming the law which supports the words “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance, and “In God we trust” as the national motto.

The measure was approved unanimously in the Senate and drew just five no votes in the House. Congress rushed to act after the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in California ruled in June that the phrase “under God,” inserted into the pledge by Congress in 1954, amounted to a government endorsement of religion in violation of the constitutional separation of church and state. The court was faulted for its “erroneous rationale” and “absurd result.”

The new law also modifies the manner in which the Pledge of Allegiance is to be delivered. When not in uniform, men should remove any nonreligious headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Previously, the standard dictated that “any headdress” be removed.

Those House members voting against the bill, all Democrats, were Barney Frank (Massachusetts), Michael Honda and Pete Stark (California), Jim McDermott (Washington) and Bobby Scott (Virginia). —Adapted from AP

## THANK YOU for PRAYING

Missionaries to the Philippines, Gracia and Martin Burnham were the focus of innumerable prayers across the U.S. and around the world during their captivity by Muslim terrorists from May 2001 until June 2002.

Tyndale has produced a twelve-minute “thank you” video from Gracia. A sample of the video is available

free of charge. Visit the website below to order the video or to see the preview sample.

[www.tyndale.com/video\\_offer.asp](http://www.tyndale.com/video_offer.asp)

## LOOKING for ALTERNATIVE INCOME in AFGHANISTAN

Opium production is projected to be ten times higher this year. Last year the Taliban boasted a 94%

reduction of poppy cultivation. Afghan poppies account for around 80% of Europe’s heroin supply. Development agencies face the daunting task of helping create alternative income sources for poppy farmers. A farmer today can expect to bring in \$6,250 per acre of poppies, but only \$25 per acre of wheat.

—World Pulse

### QUOTABLE...

Speaking about Islam in an interview with syndicated columnist and radio commentator Cal Thomas, Attorney General Ashcroft reportedly said, “Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which God sends His Son to die for you.” Ashcroft’s remarks were first reported on Thomas’ radio segment “Men of Faith in Washington, D.C.” on November 9 (2001).  
—[aiusa.org](http://aiusa.org)

### CLAMPING DOWN in E. EUROPE

Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko signed a new highly restrictive religion law Oct. 31. Considered the most restrictive religion law in Europe, it outlaws unregistered religious activity; requires compulsory prior censorship for all religious literature; bans foreign citizens from leading religious organizations; restricts publishing and education to faiths that have 10 registered communities, including at least one registered in 1982; and bans all but occasional, small religious meetings in private homes. —VOM

# The Fullness of the Godhead

*Christ is the revealer of God, and the transformer of His own.*

Do we just assume that the Lord Jesus Christ was eternal or do the Scriptures present Him as such? The latter certainly is true. Isaiah wrote of the Messiah, *“Unto us a child is born [the humanity of Christ] unto us a Son is given [the deity of Christ]: and the government shall be upon His shoulder and His name shall be called: Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace”* (Isa. 9:6). What a revelation of His attributes!

*“The everlasting Father”* is variously translated. In the Vulgate it is rendered “Father of the future age.” Elsewhere it is given as, “The Father of the everlasting age” and “The Father of eternity.” Obviously the Son of God is the paternal source of eternity. How forceful is this appellation! If it were possible to conceive the origin of eternity, the Lord Jesus is that origin.

Micah makes a very important prediction. *“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephratah, 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”* (Micah 5:2, NASV). Concerning this, Dr. Fredk A. Tatford says in his little volume, *The Prophet of Messiah’s Advent*:

No new personality came into existence at Bethlehem when Jesus was born. The Eternal had become incarnate. God had taken manhood unto Himself and the child of Mary was—and always will be—the God-Man. What He had ever been in the ages of the past, He continued to be in incarnation.

There are several similar assertions in the NT: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”* (Jn. 1:1). The question naturally arises, to what does John make reference by *“the beginning”*? Is it the beginning of creation? Is it the beginning of Christ’s life here on earth? Or is it that the word is used in an abstract way, John implying

that whenever the beginning was, the Word preexisted it and was already manifest? Here, then, we have the preexistence of an individual. That point is quite clear.

*“And the Word was with God.”* This preexistent One was *“with”* God. The preposition *“with”* suggests association. *“The same was in the beginning with God.”* Furthermore it is

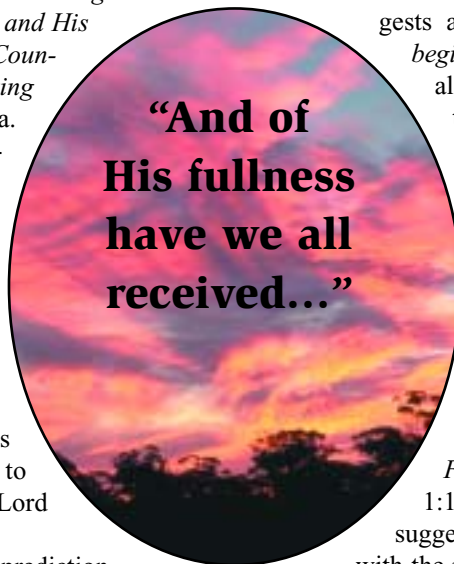
also stated, *“And the Word was [continuously] God.”* What dogmatism!

What a declaration of deity! How shall we then regard the Word? Indubitably this preexistent individual who associated with God and who bears the descriptive title *“the Word,”* is deity Himself, God manifest in flesh. *“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”* (Jn. 1:14). The word *“dwelt”* (tabernacled)

suggests the sanctuary in the wilderness, with the pillar cloud of glory arising from its inner room. There was such a glory cloud about the Saviour when He was here, figuratively speaking.

It is said that the ancient Chinese divided their words into two general categories: dead words and living words. Nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, etc., were dead words. You might have a long list of words that do not make a statement. Verbs are living words, words of action; they fit into the second category. In the Spanish translation of John’s Gospel (1569 AD, the most recent revision 1960), verse 1 reads, *“En el principio era el Verbo,”* *“In the beginning was the Verb.”* In Christ we have therefore the full expression of the Father’s love, power, and purpose.

John also records for us some of the claims of the Lord Jesus; for example, *“Before Abraham was I am.”* Some modern translations read, *“Before Abraham was born, I am,”* but that does not change the meaning. The contrast between Abraham and Jesus is a contrast between one whose existence had a beginning and One who always existed. This blessed One has a continuous,



**“And of  
His fullness  
have we all  
received...”**



present existence.

The Jews understood immediately the claims of Christ. Just as they did when the Lord Jesus spoke the parable of the Good Shepherd and said, *"I and My Father are one."* Then the Jews took up stones to cast at Him and said, *"For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God"* (Jn. 10:32-33).

In the fourth century of the Christian era there arose a heresy named Arianism. Arius, the propagator of this error, overemphasized the word "begotten" with reference to our Lord. Arius contended that since the Father begat the Son, the Son must have a beginning of existence, and was therefore inferior to the Father. The heresy was refuted and Arius was expelled from the church at the Council of Nicea (325 AD).

Part of the doctrine of the so-called Jehovah Witnesses is merely a revival of the Arianism of the fourth century. This modern cult has placed an unholy import on the words of the Apostle Paul, *"the firstborn of every creature"* (Col. 1:15). They contend that the Father created the Son, that the Son might create all else. In so doing they ignore the remainder of this great Christological passage: *"By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist"* (Col. 1:16-17). He is not one of the created elements. He predates them all. Furthermore, *"It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell."* In chapter 2 there is a related statement which is more explicit, *"In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"* (Col. 2:9).

The perversion of this same cult relative to the meaning in Scripture of the appellation "firstborn" is very subtle. That this title may be used literally of the first of a woman's offspring there is no doubt. The final plague to fall on the Egyptians at the time of Israel's deliverance from their slavery was the death of all the firstborn. The Lord had declared, *"All the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die"* (Ex. 11:5).

Notwithstanding, the title is also used figuratively in the Word of God. Its use implies a superlative, something of the greatest possible degree. The Lord uses it to describe Israel: *"Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn"* (Ex. 4:22). This cannot mean that Israel was the first original nation. There were nations and even empires before she came into exist-

tence. That nation had the pre-eminent place in God's thoughts. This is evident in the affirmation: *"I will make him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth"* (Ps. 89:27). None would be greater than Israel.

Bildad, as he answers some of Job's remarks, speaks of a destructive disease which he calls the *"firstborn of death."* He distinguishes this fatal illness as worse than others, as if it were the culmination of all deaths.

Isaiah also uses the term firstborn in a figurative sense: *"The firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety"* (Isa. 14:30). The prediction was to the effect that after the enemy had been destroyed, the poorest of the poor would be well fed.

It is surely not difficult to see that in the figurative use of the word, Christ is superlatively greater than all; He transcends everyone. He is *"the firstborn of all creation"* because He is far above and beyond creation. He is before all things and supreme over them.

The Lord Jesus is, in like manner, *"the firstborn from the dead"* (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5). *"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept"* (1 Cor. 15:20). Both "firstfruits" and "firstborn" are used synonymously. *"That in all things He might have the preeminence"* (Col. 1:18). In resurrection as in all else, Christ has the priority.

Under the law, the firstborn received the inheritance and the special patriarchal blessing. The firstborn had authority over his brethren. He also received a double portion, as well as a place in the early priesthood. What a foreshadowing of the perfect Firstborn!

The writer to the Hebrews identifies the Church as *"the general assembly and church of the firstborn"* (Heb. 12:23). The members of the Church universal are honored in splendor and glory. Grace has distinguished them and has given them a first place in the purposes of God. How wonderful the divine family must be! *"For whom He [God the Father] did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren"* (Rom. 8:29). All believers are destined to bear the image of God's Son that He might be transcendent among many brethren.

Man was created in the image of God but that image was marred in the fall. We read that Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image (Gen. 5:3). Through the redemptive work of Christ, God is restoring the divine image to all believers (Rom. 8:29). All in that family will soon resemble the Lord Jesus!





# The Pricelessness of Christ

*“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift” (2 Cor. 9:15).*

It is a peculiarity of Paul that the most ordinary of facts suggest to him the sublimest of truths. There is not an event he observes but he can find a road from it up to the cross. The love and the sacrifice of Christ form the focus to which every line of experience converges, the center on which every meditation rests. That is why in his writings you find those sudden and impassioned allusions which at first sight seem to have no direct connection with the subject. They are the utterances of a man whose heart was on fire with love to the Master, for whom life had no meaning apart from Him.

In the instance before us (2 Cor. 9:15), the apostle is encouraging the Corinthians to liberality towards poorer saints, and in so doing he plies them with a variety of arguments. They had been generous before; he was hopeful they would be generous again, so fulfilling the character he had already ascribed to them and proving his boasting to be warranted. He reminds them of the grace that God promises in the exercise of giving and the reward He bestows on the cheerful giver. He bids them think of the blessedness of those that partook of their gifts, and the thanksgiving of the Church at large on behalf of them. And then comes this text.

From the thought of man's best bounties, he turns to the great liberality of God, of which man's liberality is at best but a faint reflection. He says, *“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”* Such, as I take it, is the meaning and connection of the text. Why, then, is this gift of God an unspeakable one?

## BECAUSE IT POSSESSES UNSPEAKABLE WORTH

Putting aside the thought of the suitability of the gift, the majesty of the ends it is meant to subserve, the needs it is fitted to supply, the object given is unspeakably precious in itself. To compute that preciousness, analyze its elements, and reckon its sum, is a task at

which reason staggers for to do so would be nothing less than to estimate the value of the person of Christ.

He is the God-Man. What do we mean when we say that? For one thing, that He is the embodiment of a perfect humanity. Does not that stamp the gift as incalculably precious? He is precious as perfect purity is precious amidst universal pollution, as perfect peace is precious amidst constant commotion, as perfect obedience is precious amidst abounding rebellion, as perfect love is precious where all seek their own.

When we add to the preciousness of a sinless humanity the preciousness of indwelling deity, what shall be said of Christ's worth then? Those human hands were the hands of Him who fashioned the worlds at the first, and still keeps them rolling in space. The eyes they looked into were the eyes of Him from whose glances there is nothing hid, and who searches the eternities behind and before. The voice they listened to was the voice of Him whose authority the hosts of heaven obeyed and whose power called the dead from their graves. Rich in infinite holiness, rich in infinite wisdom, rich in infinite power, He is very God of very God, the Beginning and the End.

But why should we darken counsel with many words? *“Canst thou by searching find out God?”* When our arithmetic can reckon the wealth of omnipotence, when we have scales that can weigh the treasures of the Godhead, then and not till then can we estimate the worth of Christ. Whatever the views men conceive of it, whatever the uses they make of it, the gift is unspeakably worthy in itself.

As a picture may be valuable though the person that possesses it cares nothing for the scenes it portrays, so with the gift of God in Christ. He is unspeakably precious in the picture He displays of God, whether men feel the need of the God He reveals to them or not. He is unspeakably precious—as the pearl of great price—



whether men seek the riches He conveys to them or not. But there was a need for all this, and not till we consider it does the pricelessness of Christ become manifest. Why is this gift unspeakable?

#### IT MEETS AND PROVIDES FOR UNSPEAKABLE NEEDS

And what are these needs?

i. Unspeakable guilt, for one thing. Are there none of us who have wakened to a sense of that? It may have come to us suddenly, before our conversion experience took place, or it may have come to us gradually, when conversion experiences were over, for repentance may tarry till regeneration is past, and sorrow for the old life be delayed till the new life has begun. But however it comes, the sense will assuredly be there—a consciousness of deep ill-desert which only those who have experienced it can explain.

At times such as these—when to look back means remorse and to look forward means despair—God’s gift of a crucified Christ is revealed to us in all its unspeakable value as the one thing that meets our unspeakable need! For once let the eye of faith be opened to see Him and the hand of faith be stretched forth to grasp Him. What have I then? The consciousness of union with Himself, with all the blessings it conveys, with all the prospects it unfolds: *“the end of sin,”* the bringing in of *“an everlasting righteousness,”* peace by Christ’s blood, acceptance in Christ’s person.

Thus when the soul sees how in Christ God can be just and the Justifier of the unjust—when it is able to say, “Surely He has borne my griefs, He has carried my sorrows” then for the first time we truly echo the words, *“Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!”*

But this is only the first need for which God has provided.

ii. We pass from the thought of guilt to remind ourselves of the thought of unspeakable weakness, another of the wants for which God has provided in Christ. The poverty of those without pardon is one misery of which the saved must know something; but there is another—the poverty of those without strength.

There is a law to obey, high as heaven, broad as life, deep as the human heart; and we have neither the power nor the will to fulfill it. Sin is wound about us, embracing us so closely that in affection and desire, and all that is most and best in us, we are inextricably interwoven in its poisonous folds. And there is no influence within or around us that may help us to shake it off! Trials to endure, perhaps, pressing us in the pre-

sent, and certainly awaiting us in the future!

But the gift of God through His Son means that provision has been made, not only for unspeakable guilt, but for unspeakable weakness. And he who accepts it discovers that a new tide of vigor flows through his being till life opens up for him in its fullness. That is a possession which not only wraps up in it the warrant of pardon, but conveys at the same time the secret of power. That is a treasure which contains both the key that unlocks the prison doors and the medicine that restores the released man’s health, sending him forth not only free but whole. Well may we say, *“Bless the Lord, O my soul...who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases”* Thanks be to Him for His *“unspeakable gift.”*

iii. But besides the needs of unspeakable guilt and unspeakable weakness, there is the need of unspeakable loneliness. For man by nature is not only without pardon and without strength, he is without friendship, or at least without such a friendship as he really needs. For, not to disparage the friendships of earth, there are wants for which the richest cannot provide, there are times when the strongest and most willing cannot help. Circumstances happen when man, however loving his friends may be, must feel alone.

There are the terrible isolations of individual sorrow, when the soul finds that, close as its fellows may come to it, and willing as they may be to help, it must bear its own burden alone. Then the heart knows its own bitterness and a stranger cannot help. And there is the last and most utter isolation of all—the isolation of death, when human scenes vanish, human interests fade. Grasp the hands of our friend as we may, we cannot draw them with us where we go. In utter solitude we must travel the path by which we shall not return.

Not till you promise companionship in experiences such as these will life’s course be a matter I can manage with composure or its end be a prospect I can think of with hope. Give me the presence of One who is wise enough to say, *“This is the way, walk ye in it”* in my hours of doubt; gracious enough to say, *“I have seen thy tears, behold I will heal thee,”* in my hours of remorse; loving enough to say, *“Cast thy burden upon Me,”* in my hours of trial; near enough and strong enough to say, *“When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee.”* Give me the presence of a Comforter like this; then, and not till then, will the heart be satisfied, and the life amidst dangers and changes be calm.

You know where the need is supplied. There are not only pardon and strength—there is companionship in Christ—a companionship whose offices no length of time can weary, whose care and whose interest no depths of unworthiness can chill, and whose riches no frequency of application can exhaust. *“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!”*

#### IT CONVEYS UNSPEAKABLE BLESSINGS

Perhaps it may seem as if this thought were merely a repetition of the last one, for if a gift meets unspeakable needs, it must certainly convey unspeakable blessings. Yet it may be best to keep them separate for the fact is, that in this case, large as the wants are, the provisions that supply them are larger. Great as man's poverty is, greater still is God's grace. It is one thing to take a vessel and to fill it; it is another to place it in a boundless sea, where it may ever float, ever brimming. So with God's great bounty towards sin-emptied man. There is not only sufficiency, but plenitude—broad as God's mercy, deep as God's heart. The cup is not only supplied, it runs over. God's thoughts in this matter are not as on our thoughts, nor are His ways our ways. He not only does all we might conceive to be necessary, if the choosing were left to us: He does exceeding abundantly, far above all that is asked or thought.

i. Have we exhausted God's provision for infinite guilt when we say that for infinite guilt He gives infinite pardon? That would be much, but it is not all. For not as the offense is, so is the free gift. Where sin has abounded, there grace has abounded much more. Those whom God favors with infinite pardon, He raises to infinite dignity. The king in his clemency may give a pardon to rebels, restoring them the liberty they had forfeited, presenting them with the privileges they had lost, but what king on earth ever translated those rebels from the prison-house straight to the palace, making them members of his own royal family, giving them a share in the children's heritage? Yet this is what happens in grace. They who have Christ, have not only the seal of forgiveness, they have also the security of adoption. All whom God makes freedmen, He makes at the same time sons, and if sons, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

We are possessors, even as Christ is possessor, of the world, of life and death, of things present and things to come. Thus God restores that which He took not away. So does God fetch from disaster the possibility of a higher blessing. So does He bring from the ravages of evil a better good than existed before the evil had entered, to the praise of His fathomless wisdom, to the glory of His infinite grace.

## Given the Star Treatment

*“The heavens declare the glory of God,”* (Ps. 19:1) but what do they declare concerning that self-revelation? Paul would begin by telling us that the wrath of God is merited by men who *“hold [down] the truth”* (Rom. 1:18): *“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them.”* In some way, he wrote, *“the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.”* What can we know? *“His eternal power and Godhead.”* Thus men *“are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God...but became vain in their imaginations...”* (vv. 19-21). Was it the stars, given *“for signs”* (Gen. 1:14) that they corrupted into their false reading of the Zodiac? Job tells us: *“By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens”* (26:13). And Paul takes it even further with a remarkable application of Psalm 19:4 in Romans 10. He is discussing a potential problem with the gospel plan. What if we fail to take the message? Will God fail? *“How shall they hear without a preacher?”* Is Paul's answer the one we often give—they can't be saved because they haven't heard? No, he says, *“they have not all obeyed the gospel”* (v. 16), but *“Have they not heard? Yes verily, their [the stars] sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world”* (Rom. 10:18). Was Paul saying that people like the wise men, rightly reading the stars, could find their way to the Saviour? Something to think about! —*ed.*



ii. Or again, have we described God's provision for weakness when we say that for weakness He discloses a sufficiency of strength? No, for in Christ there is more than mere strength. There is the pledge of unspeakable victory. It would be much to stand in the evil day; but the promise for those who have Christ is that they shall be "*more than conquerors.*" They shall be as warriors who are not only victorious but actually enriched by the contest, who, besides repulsing the foe have made themselves masters of the spoil.

No, we have not exhausted God's bounty in Christ, when we say that for feebleness He brings might; He assures us of mastery, mastery in its fullness and mastery in its fruits. "*Thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ!*"

iii. Or, once more, have we exhausted God's vision for loneliness, when we say that for loneliness He proffers companionship? That would be much, but there is more. There is unspeakable sympathy. For in Christ there is a fellow-feeling so wide that it sweeps the range of every emotion which the Christian can experience. What are the circumstances in which a believer may be placed when he cannot trace the footsteps of a Saviour before him? When can he not know that His heart, as the heart of a brother that is born for adversity, throbs along with him?

Not the infirmities of a weary frame, for He fainted in the heat of the sun on His way to the well of Samaria, and staggered beneath the weight of the cross on His path to the hill of Calvary. Not the bitterness of bereavement, for He wept at Lazarus' grave. Not the solicitations of mistaken friends, not the fiery darts of the Evil One, for in all these points He was tested Himself. Not the loneliness of desertion; for He saw one after another fall off from Him till at the last, in the uttermost of His need, His nearest companions all forsook Him and fled.

We will not be alone in the solemnities of death, with all the novelty of its mysterious experiences—the gathering darkness, the loosening frame, the passing spirit. For He who says, "In the valley of the shadow of death I will be with thee" has died Himself.

Had we been told in our loneliness that God would be our companion, there are some things we might possibly have looked for: wisdom to discern our case, and strength to bear it. But the ability to enter into our case, enabling Him to deal with it as on our level, so bearing a second time in sympathy what He has already borne in experience, who could have thought

of this? Well may we speak of the Captain of our salvation as One "*made perfect through suffering.*" Well too may we join in the gratitude of Paul: "*Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.*"

#### IT IS THE EMBODIMENT OF UNSPEAKABLE LOVE

We have now reached the spring and origin of all. For back of the gift itself, with all the value it possesses, with all the needs it supplies, and with all the blessings it conveys, we have pierced to the heart of the Giver Himself and its impulse of unspeakable love.

Herein is manifested the love of God, not in creation with its large and most liberal bounty, not in Providence with its minute and unfailing care, but in the dispensation of His grace—the all-including, all-sanctifying, and all-crowning disclosure He has made to us in His Son. How, then, can we embrace such love?

i. This gift is the evidence of unspeakable love because for one thing it was provided at unspeakable cost. You measure the love in a gift not merely by the worth it possesses, but by the sacrifice which the giving entails. You say of it, "I know there is love here—for toil has been spent in preparing it; pain has been borne in surrendering it!"

Here we enter the region of mystery and I am not going to ask how far, or in what sense, it was possible for the Father, as a distinctive person in the Trinity, to suffer in the giving of His Son. Human types are inadequate. Human analogies fade. For after all we are dealing not with what is human, but what is divine. To suppose a wrench such as that which Abraham endured when he surrendered Isaac is to forget that sacrifice, as it exists in man, must be a different matter from sacrifice as it exists in God—conditioned by other elements, sustained by other motives. Let us remember that in this case there was no separation between Father and Son at all. The Gift and the Giver are one.

This gift will be sacred for this among other reasons: it comes charged with the memories and stamped with the evidence of an infinite cost—the toil and the travail, the agony and sweat, the strong crying and tears of the Son of God. Precious was the drink of cold water to David which brave men fetched for him from the well of Bethlehem. So precious was it that he refused to partake of it, but poured it out as a sacrifice to God. So the living water which is offered to you and me will be sacred for the same reason—it is the price of blood. He who comes bringing it is red in His apparel, and His garments are as those who have trodden the winepress.



In His hands and His feet and His side are the wounds He has gotten in obtaining it.

It is a gift which proclaims to us infinite love, for this among other reasons, that it was purchased at infinite price. Only in this case we best show our gratitude to the Giver, we best prove our estimate of the gift—not by setting it aside, as a thing too sacred for common lips, too costly for common need, but by accepting and by using it freely. *“What shall I render to the Lord, for His benefits? I will take the cup of salvation”* Freely it is offered me, and freely I receive it—to drink of the life-giving draught and be satisfied.

ii. That brings me to touch on the last thought. This gift is the evidence of unspeakable love because bestowed with unspeakable freedom. It is true the very idea of a gift is exclusive of thoughts as to debt. A gift is something gratuitous, not to be earned, not to be toiled for, but simply taken. Yet there are degrees as to freedom, even in the matter of a gift.

There may lie some constraint in the heart of the giver; there may lie some limitation as to the character of the receiver; there may be some inaccessibility, as to the position of the gift. But herein God has commended His love to us. The gift He has provided at unspeakable cost is bestowed with unspeakable freedom. There is unspeakable freedom as to motive. For when He gives, He gives heartily and liberally, without reserve, without regret, and without upbraiding.

There is unspeakable freedom as to offer. For to sinners who need repentance, yes, and to the righteous who think they have need of none; to those who have defied Him by open hostility, yes, and to those who have mocked Him by hypocritical profession—to those who are burdened with guilt that He may give them the pardon they need, yes, and to those whose main burden is that they feel their burden so little, that He may give them the sorrow they miss—to rebels who have never yet bowed to Him, and to wanderers who have bowed to Him, and then forsaken Him—to one and to all, whatever their circumstances and whatever their character, God in His grace makes an offer of His Son. There is unspeakable freedom as to the accessibility


and supply of the gift.

God might have provided a gift, and yet might have placed it where effort alone would have grasped it, or searching alone might have found it. But *“Behold,”* He has said, *“I bring My righteousness near.”* This gift is near as the Bible is near. It is near as a Throne of grace is near. It is near as the strivings of God’s Spirit are near. Be your circumstances what they may, you are never so far from it that faith’s faintest sigh will not fetch it, and its finger-tip touch it where you stand. Here is unspeakable love indeed, for the gift it has granted us is not only purchased at an infinite cost, it is offered and bestowed with an infinite freedom.

Such are some of the thoughts that spring up in connection with this illimitable text. Poor as all human speech seems, as it grapples with a subject like the present, its very inadequacy has a lesson. It teaches us that God’s blessing to man in His Son is a matter forever unspeakable.

Have you received that blessing? Free as the scattered glories of the earth’s circling sun, free as the crystal wealth of its running streams, there are those who choose to live in disregard of God’s greatest bounty—men who, though the light of Life shines above them, will not see, and though the River of Life sparkles past them, will not drink.

But think! The greater the value of the gift, the greater your loss if you finally reject it. The richer the love that has prompted its bestowal, the deeper the wrath that shall visit its neglect. You have no right to anything in this wide world of His till you can use and enjoy it in union with Christ. Before all gifts comes this gift—the gift of a Saviour. The sunshine is not yours, nor the rain, nor the fruitful seasons, nor the joys of home, nor the refreshments of sleep. If granted at all, they are a grant upon sufferance, not an evidence of approval. You participate in them on your own responsibility, you use them at your own peril.

O poverty most pitiful of those who are destitute both of a hope for eternity, and of true life in time, who have a claim neither to the food that they eat nor the air that they breathe! O wealth most immense of those who, in Christ, have a title to all things, to whom earth lies open with its bounties, and life is sanctified through its manifold experience, and who, when earth is dissolved in the judgment fires, and life has vanished like a dream at waking time, have an exceeding weight of glory assured them in an eternity beyond! *“Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.”* 

# Great is Thy Faithfulness

*He that spared not His own Son...freely giving all things.*

Malignant melanoma! A new word had entered our family's vocabulary, a synonym for fear.

It was February 1973 and we had been on the mission field in Lima, Peru for nine years. It had been more than long enough to prove the confidence we had put in the Lord. After eleven years of praying, asking, listening, waiting, we had heard the Lord's clear call and had been commended by the small assembly in Hutchinson, Kansas, to put all aside and launch out, taking our three children to an unfamiliar land to serve an unknown people in the gospel.

Well we remembered how the elders in our commending assembly expressed their concerns for our financial support. We had appreciated their thoughts as they tried to put into proper perspective the few believers in the assembly, the small monthly missionary offerings, and the cost of maintaining a family of five in the metropolis that was Lima. We had sympathized with the elders, but assured them we were looking to the Lord of the Harvest for our needs and to the assembly for its prayers.

## THE CALL

Now, nine years later, on a typical day in Lima, came the telephone call. Melanoma! It was the voice of Richard Burson, an elder in our commending assembly, a full-time worker and also guardian

for our oldest, Tom, 18, studying in the local junior college. His message? The spot on Tom's back that had been excised four months earlier had returned, and had been diagnosed as malignant melanoma. Then came the doctor's observation: he had had 15 melanoma patients in 20 years of practice; it was a particularly virulent form of cancer; all but two of his patients had died of the dread disease. It was recommended that Tom be taken to the M. D. Anderson cancer research hospital in Houston, Texas, immediately. The rest of the conversation with Richard was received in a haze and fades from memory.

When I had answered that phone call I had heard the "beep" that always signals an international call, and therefore had called to Florence. She was at my side listening to my responses during the conversation and, of course, could sense the seriousness of the matter without knowing the details. A hurried explanation to her was followed by calling our other children, Paul, 16, and Elizabeth, 15, to the living room where all was explained and where we prayed, committing Tom and ourselves to the Lord for whatever was to follow.

Only then came the realization of the extra income we would need to provide for these added expenses!

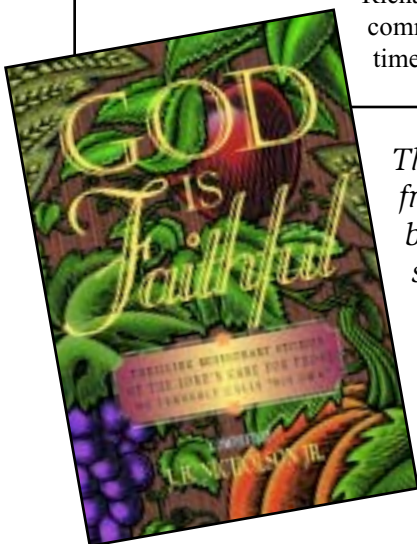
## THAT EXTRA INCOME

The first year we were in Peru we were grateful to note that our financial support for that year was exactly equal to my salary as a public school teacher the year before we went to Peru. We had thanked God for His faithfulness and for thus demonstrating that He would not do less for us than He had done while we were in secular work. We had, indeed, experienced some months of "no extras" in our family, but always enough. "My God shall supply all your NEED..."

In the face of so much need in Peru we had even been able to increase the percentage of our giving which Florence and I had covenanted with the Lord to pass on directly to His work and for some of the needs of the Peruvian believers. And we knew that it is in such a context of sharing with others that the Apostle Paul states that principle/promise in Philippians 4:19.

Yes, the extra income! As we began to settle into the

*This story is excerpted from a newly released book which recounts scores of thrilling missionary stories documenting the dependability of God in caring for His own. Order from GFP (see pg. 31).*



reality of the situation with Tom, our need to be with him, to guide him through whatever experiences lay ahead, to comfort, to encourage, to share and to learn, we began to make plans. Foremost in our minds was the considerable cost of air fares for four people.

But, there was that extra income! For each of the three months prior to the phone call from Tom's guardian we had been surprised by a noticeable increase in support. The first month Florence and I had merely commented on it, with thanksgiving. The second month of such increase in support we had wondered aloud what the Lord had in mind, and had even mentioned one or two possible "projects" we had talked of related to our ministries in Peru. But the third month of considerable increase of funds we really knew that the Lord had a definite purpose in mind and it was for us to wait and see what it might be.

Now we knew. *"It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer"* (Isa. 65:24). Now we understood. We gave thanks again to our faithful God, purchased the airline tickets and packed our suitcases.

Of course, the experience of God's provision in unusual circumstances did not end there, though the provision for that amount was sufficient in itself to give testimony to His glory, testimony which we have happily given many times over the years.

At that time we did not have medical insurance. We had been directed to the cancer research center in Texas, a facility with over 700 outpatients per day, all with one or another form of cancer.

We arrived in Houston about the same time Tom's grandparents arrived with him from Kansas. In a special time of prayer with our gracious hosts, Stan and Marilyn Boyer, and the elders from their assembly, we committed Tom to the Lord for His all-wise and all-loving care, and began what was to be 18 months of hospital visits, doctors' consultations, experimental treatments, much more prayer, abundant tears and, ALWAYS, God's faithfulness.

#### DAY BY DAY

Almost our first "hurdle" was not with the disease itself but with the business office of the hospital. As it had been almost ten years since we had any dealings with hospitals in the U.S., we were totally innocent of what it meant for a patient to approach a hospital for treatment without medical insurance.

When our "financial situation" became clear to the business office (meaning no insurance, missionaries by

profession, no mission board, no guaranteed salary, residents of a foreign country), there was considerable consultation by the hospital authorities with the final decision that Tom would be accepted as a patient only if daily expenses could be settled on a daily basis. Could we accept such a condition? Yes, we could, but it was not just because we had no alternative. It was because we had an ever faithful God who had prepared us "before [we] called..." for just this moment and circumstance.

There followed 18 months of doctors' fees, hospital fees, in-patient, out-patient, experimental treatments, travel expenses, etc. Expenses were indeed paid daily. Thousands of dollars passed through our hands. The money was always there. There were tears—tears for Tom and tears of thankfulness for God's presence and His provision. In addition, there was the loving and sacrificial response of many believers in the Braeburn assembly and the Spanish speaking assembly in Houston with supportive visits, homes opened for our time spent in Houston and vehicles always at our disposal.

But there was another supply. As commitment and confidence increased, peace increased. As we saw we lacked nothing, our thankfulness grew. We learned to share the truth of those lines of Florence's favorite missionary poet, Amy Carmichael, "In acceptance lieth peace..." And this, after all, was the most important provision of our faithful God.

Eighteen months passed. No treatment produced positive results. A temporary delay of the advance of the dread disease came now and then, but it was a downhill progression all the way. Tom's body did not respond, and eventually his super-alert and super-keen mind began to falter along with his body. An avid reader, he found he could not concentrate on the one activity he loved most. Well we remember the last lucid conversation he had with us when, with child-like simplicity he asked, "Do you think God still wants me in this condition?" Tom was saved and baptized and taken into fellowship at an early age and we could assure him that God not only would have him, but was eager to have him, and that it was "far better" to be with Christ.

Once the disease had metastasized to the brain, the end was near. That is, the end of the earthly part. On July 13, 1974, at the age of 19, Tom entered into full life. His ordeal was over. We had learned many lessons, and we had been confirmed in our convictions. *"His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS"* (Lam. 3:23). 🕯



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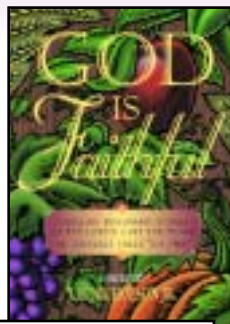
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Prayer in Soul Winning	Sanders	J. O.	June	2002	Who Then Is Willing?	Pell	William	June	2002
The Pot of Oil	Fereday	W. W.	July-August	2000	Who's In Your Neighbourhood?	Dunlap	David	October	2000
The Rent Veil	Haldeman	I. M.	April	2000	Real Palestinians	Nicholson	J. B. Jr.	July-August	2002
The Root of Knowledge	Arnot	William	Dec-Jan	2001	Wisdom in our Thoughts	Horton	R. F.	Dec-Jan	2001
The Secret of the Church	Gunning	Brian	January	2000	Wise Sayings of Old	Harlow	R. E.	Dec-Jan	2001
The Sin of Loveless Hearts	Nicholson	J. Boyd Sr.	October	2001	Working with Children	Dunlap	David	May	2000
The Soft Man from Rock	Bjorlie	John	December	2001	“Yes, We Have No Bananas”	Schlieff	Vernon	April	2002
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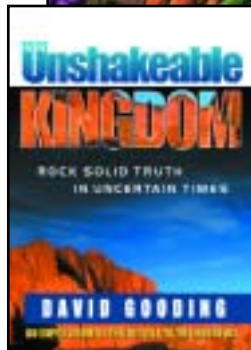


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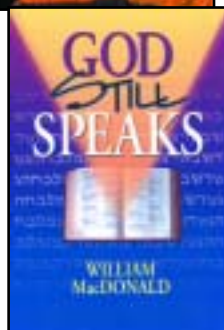


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## *His* **FIRST CHRISTMAS** *in* **HEAVEN**

*Hy. Pickering tells the story of a doctor of his acquaintance who recounted a personal story at a Keswick convention where he was a speaker. Pickering writes:*



**A**s a time of reunion with loved ones, surely we all look forward to Christmas with expectant joy. No, not all with joy, for to some the vacant seat at the family board is a source of sorrow instead of joy. This is borne out by a true incident related by the doctor himself... The doctor, whose name is well-known in connection with Christian work, went one summer with his wife and large family of boys to a coast town for a lengthy holiday. While there one of the boys took ill, and with sorrowing hearts the father, mother and brothers saw little Willie pass from their midst, and laid to rest by the sea. The months from July to December sped quickly by, but the father's heart, instead of getting lighter, seemed to get more bowed down under the load of sorrow. The climax was reached on Christmas morning, when the family was gathered at the breakfast table. No, not all—one vacant chair told of a break in the family circle, a little grave at the seaside, and a heavy heart at the head of the table. Sitting in silent sorrow, the father was observed by one of the other boys, who quickly read the meaning of the tear-filled eyes. Looking

across the table, he said, "Father, this will be Willie's first Christmas in heaven."

"Ah!" said the doctor, "I could have blessed that boy for reminding me that if Willie was absent from his earthly father's board he was 'far better' at his heavenly Father's table."

But more comfort was to come, for another little fellow, emboldened by the first, exclaimed, "But, Father, isn't it always Christmas in heaven?"

"I could have doubly blessed that second boy," added the doctor, "for reminding me that, through Jesus' precious blood, Willie had donned the white robe, never to have it spotted; had received the crown, never to lay it aside; had been welcomed into that land where 'the Lamb is all the glory.'"

Now I do not know, nor do I care, whether Christmas will ever be spoken about in Heaven, but this I do know—we shall always have Christ in heaven. We shall forever gaze on the One born at Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, crucified at Calvary and now seated in glory. —*100 Thrilling Tales*