

The BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2025



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This month’s cover features Beavertail Lighthouse in Jamestown, Rhode Island.

The Purpose of the Berean Bible Society is to help you understand, enjoy, and apply the Bible. The Mission of BBS is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ by proclaiming the whole counsel of God according to the revelation of the Mystery. Our Goals are to evangelize the lost, to educate the saved in “rightly dividing the Word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15), to energize the transformation of the Christian life, and to encourage the local church.

BBS is a faith-based ministry dependent on the gifts of God’s people.
We are thankful for your gifts of support.

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You can reach us at:

BEREAN BIBLE SOCIETY
N112 W17761 Mequon Road
Germantown, WI 53022



Office: 262.255.4750 | Monday–Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, CT

Website: bereanbiblesociety.org

E-mail: berean@bereanbiblesociety.org

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A Note From the President

Dear Friends in Christ,

Recently, we received the following email and picture from a dear friend of *Berean Bible Society*:

"Warm greetings to all you grace warriors at the BBS! This is a picture of our Bible study group at our very small outpost here in Wyoming. Maybe a dozen folks, usually a pile of young 'uns running



around, but gotta admit it always feels warm and festive! This lesson was from the latest *Searchlight*, 'The Resurrection Cover-Up.' Very well received! Thank you so much! Line by line, precept by precept, we hope to grow in His grace and to become established and grounded in the faith. Next step is to bring these folks to a grace conference!"

This email and picture were very meaningful to me, because Brother Lars was helped to see God's message of grace for today in part by *Transformed by Grace*. We have had the pleasure of meeting Lars, his wife, and his family at various conferences. He is always an encouragement, and he continues to rejoice in God's grace and his freedom from religion. Please pray for this Berean outpost in Gillette, Wyoming.

We recently recorded our 400th episode of *Transformed by Grace*. We are thankful to the Lord for how He has used and provided for this ministry. We hear about the different ways people use our videos, such as for Sunday services, in Bible studies, or simply watching as a family. If you are using our TBG videos in this way, would you mind emailing us a picture of this? We would post these pictures on social media or print them in the *Searchlight* and thereby make your local church or Bible study better known as well.

We definitely plan to continue making *Transformed by Grace* videos. Lord willing, we are heading for the next 400. Please pray for the Lord to continue to use this ministry for His glory and for the furtherance of the truth of His Word, rightly divided.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Kevin J. Sadler



Pastor Kevin J. Sadler has been serving as president since 2016. He appears on *Transformed by Grace*, a daily television program that airs nationally. In addition, he is the editor of the *Berean Searchlight*, authors grace literature, and is a Bible conference speaker.



VOICE

A Still Small

“...And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:11-12).

After Elijah fled to Mount Horeb, God patiently worked with the prophet to bring him out of his despondency. In doing so, the Lord passed by the mount, and suddenly a mighty wind swept across the ridges. It roared through the canyons and tore at the mountain, breaking rocks into pieces, “but the LORD was not in the wind.” Then a powerful earthquake violently shook the entire mountain as Elijah sat in one of its caves (vv. 9,13), “but the LORD was not in the earthquake.” This was followed by a sheet of fire passing before the mount as Elijah saw and felt its great heat and power, “but the LORD was not in the fire.”

When the wind stopped blowing, when the earth stopped trembling, and when the fire disappeared, there was stillness on the mountain. In the intensity of that silence came “a still small voice.” And God was in that voice. God’s power was revealed in His Word. As we learn about Him through the pages of His Holy Word, the Lord speaks to us with a gentle and quiet voice. This is where God’s power is revealed to us. God’s still, small voice brings His mighty Word to the listening ears and hearts of those who spend time in it.

God was showing Elijah that His presence and power aren’t revealed in the manner we usually think, or in the things we expect, in what’s impressive and dramatic. We often think of God working in the spectacular, colossal, extraordinary, bright, loud, ground-shaking things. But often, He’s not in those things. Almighty God does His work quietly, often imperceptibly, like a soft whisper. God most often works in tones of gentle love and quiet persuasion. Some of God’s greatest miracles are not in the big demonstrations of power and might but in the humble, little, quiet, everyday things of life, in small daily miracles such as the day-to-day miracle of your spiritual growth through His Word.

—Pastor Kevin Sadler



CHRIST:

Our Kinsman-Redeemer

PASTOR KEN LAWSON
BBS Board Member

The Kinsman-Redeemer

When God gave the law through Moses, He knew that the children of Israel would need mercy, so He instituted a series of statutes that would affect the social life of His people. One of those provisions was the law of the kinsman-redeemer. This law is vividly set forth in the Book of Leviticus.

“And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger’s family:

“After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him:

“Either his uncle, or his uncle’s son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself.

“And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he was sold to him unto the year of jubile; and the price of his sale shall be according unto the number of years, according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him.

“If there be yet many years behind, according unto them he shall give again the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for.

“And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubile, then he shall count with him, and according unto his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption.

“And as a yearly hired servant shall he be with him: and the other shall not rule with rigour over him in thy sight.

“And if he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubile, both he, and his children with him.

“For unto Me the children of Israel are servants; they are My servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God” (Lev. 25:47-55).

The average person today might read this passage and think, “What does that have to do with me? We are not under the law. Slavery has been abolished. We have no such practice today and this portion is the record of a custom which has long since died.”



Before we so easily dismiss any part of the Word of God as dead history or as not applicable for today, we would do well to consider the testimony of the Word to its own timelessness.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16,17).

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort

of the Scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

The Details and Application

The law of the kinsman-redeemer is not only a record of God’s mercy to poor Jews under the law, but also a wonderful type or shadow of God’s present-day mercy to all the world through the great Kinsman-Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us glean some of the details of this law as to better appreciate its beauty and its fulfillment in Christ.

1. A Hebrew brother could sell himself into slavery if poverty should overtake him.

2. After the brother became a slave, he could be redeemed (bought back) out of bondage by a member of his family and set free. (This was the “nigh of kin;” thus the term “kinsman-redeemer”). See the beautiful story of Ruth (Ruth 4:1-22).

3. He could also redeem himself out of slavery from accumulated pay, as he was to receive some wages for his work.

4. His master was not to rule over him with vigor (ruthlessly, severely, or brutally).

5. If he could not redeem himself or if a relative could not or was unwilling, he would go out free in the Year of Jubilee.

6. The Year of Jubilee, also known as the “year of liberty” (Ezek. 46:17), was every fiftieth year after seven cycles of seven years (Lev. 25:10).



7. The poor could also sell the land of their inheritance to another (Lev. 25:25-28), which could later be redeemed or returned to the original owner in the Year of Jubilee.

8. The price for the redemption of land or men was set according to the number of years from the Year of Jubilee. If the number of years was small, the redemption price was small. If the number of years was great, the redemption price was great.

9. The Year of Jubilee was a gracious provision from God because the sons of Israel were really His servants whom He brought out from the bondage of the Egyptians. The land of Israel belonged to God, which He gave to the Hebrews as their eternal inheritance.

Now that we know the details of the law, we can begin to see the spiritual interpretations based on subsequent Bible history and the reality of Jesus Christ as the Kinsman-Redeemer. While the primary interpretation is to Israel, I think we can legitimately make many precious applications for

us Gentiles under the dispensation of grace.

The poverty of spirit caused by sin translates into a bondage to the master of darkness to which all men naturally belong (Eph. 2:1-3). Slavery to sin and Satan is the lot of all those born of Adam, and that results in a state of hopelessness from which all are helpless to extricate themselves (Rom. 5:6; Eph. 2:12). What comes next is where the reality is held in sharp contrast with the shadow. Unlike the law of the kinsman-redeemer in Leviticus 25, a slave, sold under sin, is powerless to redeem himself; neither is his kin able to do so.

“None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)” (Psa. 49:7-8).

The sense of the last part of the above “and it ceaseth for ever” is that kinsmen should halt forever the attempt to pay for their redemption. The abyss of man’s depravity is far too deep and the cost of the soul much too

expensive to be purchased with silver or gold. The only answer, if there is an answer, must reside in God Himself. The brightness of the Lord's voice pierces the darkness with a message of love and hope.

“Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go” (Isa. 48:17).



The title of “Redeemer” is used of God 18 times in the Old Testament (Job 19:25; Psa. 19:14; 78:35; Prov. 23:11; Isa. 41:14; 43:14; 44:6,24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7,26; 54:5,8; 59:20; 60:16; 63:16; Jer. 50:34) and is the English translation of the Hebrew word “Gaal.” It is the same word that is used in Leviticus concerning the kinsman-redeemer. It means simply to redeem, purchase, or ransom. The first occurrence of the word, and one of the most striking, is from a man whose patience in suffering is legendary.

“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall

stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25,26).

An Old Testament Riddle

One thing that must have puzzled the sages of old is how their Gaal (Redeemer), Who is the Lord God, could also be a blood relative. How could this be? Is it even possible? How would God do it? The chasm between the majesty of God and that of man was so great as to seem impossible to bridge. The making of a Kinsman-Redeemer for Israel would, of necessity, involve some kind of miracle in which God would take on human (Jewish) flesh and blood. Perhaps this was confirmed in their minds by passages such as this:

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt. 1:23 cf. Isa. 7:14).

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6,7).

A virgin conceiving a son who is “God with us” and a child being born who is called “The mighty God”? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Fast forward 800 years into the future and

hear the words of God to the Hebrews of Christ's day.

“For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren...” (Heb. 2:16,17).

Paul wrote to the Gentiles of the same necessity of God being made in the likeness of human flesh.

“[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” (Phil. 2:6,7).

The Divine Recompense

We have seen the miracle of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ into a human body, but it still doesn't answer the issue of payment. Jesus was a modest carpenter and had little of the world's goods. What did He have that was so precious that it would purchase freedom for His brethren and satisfy the claims of justice for the sins of the whole world? The next verse from Philippians is the key.

“And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8).

There was something in Christ's death on the cross that God found supremely satisfying

and which flung open the prison doors to all who would enter in by faith.

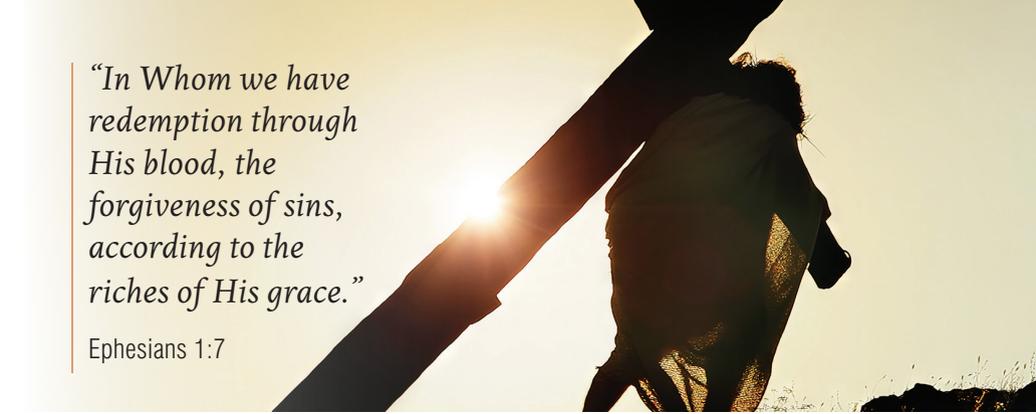


“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:18,19).

“...and without shedding of blood is no remission [forgiveness]” (Heb. 9:22).

“And He is the propitiation [satisfaction] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

Jesus Christ fulfilled His mission to be man's Kinsman-Redeemer. He became a man without relinquishing His deity. He lived a perfect life without sin. He voluntarily laid down His life on the cross in obedience to the Father's will. And the blood that flowed from His body became the precious payment for the sins of the world. This last statement should be unspeakably precious to us Gentiles, since the law of the



“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

Ephesians 1:7

kinsman-redeemer applied only to Israel. Paul confirmed the wideness of the merits of Christ's redemption when he wrote to the Gentiles.

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).

“...Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us...redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).

“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7).

Something More?

As wonderful as the redemption of our souls is, it does not stop there. The whole matter of inheritance comes into play, for another function of the kinsman-redeemer is to buy back the property rights of the poor and return them to the family. After Christ's return, He will bring back the believing remnant of Israel to the land of promise and enlarge their borders far beyond that of Solomon. It will extend from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates

(Gen. 15:18; Ex. 23:31; Deut. 1:7,8) and will be their everlasting possession (Amos 9:14,15). It will be a Jubilee, not for a year, but for a millennium (Rev. 20:4-6). The joy of the Lord will characterize the Kingdom of Christ and it will merge into the eternal state of God's kingdom.

As for the Gentiles in the dispensation of grace, God has given us a heavenly inheritance which shall not be taken away (Eph. 1:11,18). We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Or to use an earthly illustration: If our father loved us enough to buy us a new car, wouldn't he also throw in the air-conditioning, power windows, cruise control, and adjustable seats? Our heavenly Father has sent His Son to purchase our redemption and with it all the privileges of inheritance. We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ and have a heavenly citizenship with all the rights and privileges (Eph. 1:3; Phil. 3:20). God has not left out anything that could diminish

our enjoyment of spiritual life on earth or in heaven. Christ Himself is our inheritance as we are His.

“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32).

The Final Offer

Are you weary of working a field of harvest that only brings disappointment? Do you long for a life worth living? Has your wise plan gone awry, and now you thirst for the fulfillment that only freedom in Christ can bring? We must be willing not only to recognize our bondage, but also have humility enough to

receive the free gift of salvation by faith alone.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8,9).

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

Our Kinsman-Redeemer is waiting with open arms to receive His brother. Your debt of sin has been fully paid with His life’s blood. Trust Him now and God’s family will be your family. Christ’s inheritance will be your inheritance, and you will eat at His table of all good things.

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



SPOTLIGHT *on Grace Churches*

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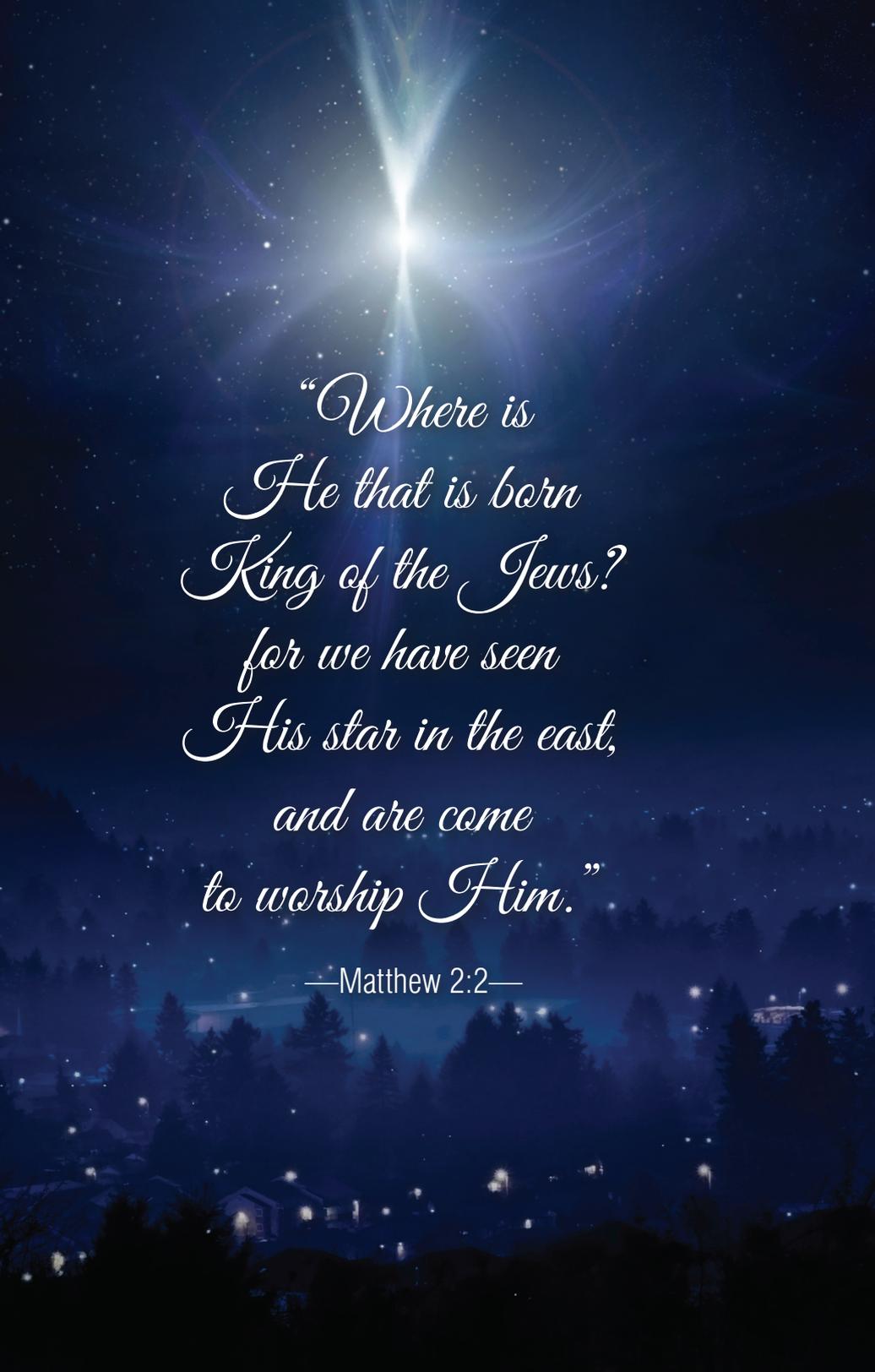
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Email: info@gracebiblechurchny.org

Website: gracebiblechurchny.org





*“Where is
He that is born
King of the Jews?
for we have seen
His star in the east,
and are come
to worship Him.”*

—Matthew 2:2—



Looking for the King

Matthew 2:1-12

PASTOR JIM TOLLAR
BBS Business Manager

The Christmas season is the time of year when many set up a nativity scene. Most nativity sets include the shepherds and the wise men bringing gifts. However, Scripture clearly shows that the visit from the wise men took place well after the birth of Christ, and after traveling a great distance to worship the One born “King of the Jews.” These Gentiles had done something that the nation of Israel should have been doing: looking to the prophetic Scriptures and understanding that their Messiah, Christ the King, was in their midst. In Luke 2:25-38, we read about Simeon and Anna, both of whom had been looking for the Messiah, and God answered their prayers. But it’s in Matthew’s Gospel that we read about a group of faithful Gentiles who were looking for the King.

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem” (Matt. 2:1).

After the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:18-25), travelers from the East came to Jerusalem during the days of King Herod. They weren’t on a business trip or traveling on vacation, but instead had come a great distance for a specific purpose, as we learn in the following verse.

“Saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him” (Matt. 2:2).

These wise men (v. 1) or “magi” specialized in the study of astronomy and enchantment and were also called magicians in the time of Daniel (see Dan. 1:20; 2:2,27 cf. 5:7). We learn from Scripture that Daniel and his three friends (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) were considered “wise men,” and were to be killed because the other wise men in the kingdom could not tell or interpret Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 2:6,12-13). However, Daniel

“Do we get excited and do we rejoice over the things of God?”



and his friends were able to reveal and interpret the dream because they trusted and believed the one, true God (Dan. 2:27-28). Because of Daniel’s and his friends’ godly influence, the Word of God was now in Babylon for all to read (Dan. 9:2).

Many years later, a caravan of wise men came from the East (perhaps Babylon) to Jerusalem, asking to see the King of the Jews because they had seen His “miraculous star” in the eastern sky and came to worship Him. They would have been familiar with verses like Daniel 9:24-25, which gave a prophetic timeline about the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the coming of “the Messiah the Prince.” The wise men were following God’s prophetic clock. They understood that Israel’s Messiah had been born recently, because they studied the Word of God. We can learn a lot from these guys. Just as they studied the Word of God, we should diligently study God’s Word, rightly divided, to understand God’s timeline (Eph. 3:1-12; 2 Tim. 2:15).

If the wise men knew to come and look for the King of the Jews, why weren’t the religious leaders in Israel and the majority of the people also looking for Him? After all, they had God’s Word (Rom. 3:1-2) and those in Jerusalem should have been rejoicing and able to give an answer. But instead,

“When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him” (Matt. 2:3).

This is an indictment on the nation of Israel and their spiritual condition. The birth of their Messiah should have been good news (Luke 2:10), but to King Herod and the unbelieving leaders, this news was very troubling!

“And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel” (Matt. 2:4-6).

The chief priests and scribes pointed Herod to the prophetic Scriptures concerning the Messiah, specifically Micah 5:2a, *“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....”* But they DID NOT quote the last part that shows the Messiah to be God, *“... Whose goings forth have been from old, even from everlasting”* (Micah 5:2b). King Herod was known for his jealousy and cruelty, and they were probably afraid to quote the last part of Micah for fear of Herod’s reaction.

After consulting the priests and scribes,

“Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also” (Matt. 2:7-8).

Herod was a liar! His intention was not to worship the young child, but to kill Him (Matt. 2:13-18). The fact that Jesus is called a “young child” gives us a clue that He was no longer an infant, but around two years old (cf. Matt. 2:16). When Herod spoke to the wise men, they did not yet know of his evil intentions, so we read that

“When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy” (Matt. 2:9-10).



Herod commanded them to go to Bethlehem, and the star which had led them to Jerusalem miraculously reappears to lead them in a different direction. Only a mighty God can perform such a miracle, as when Saul of Tarsus met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:7). The star “stood” over where Jesus was now living and

they rejoiced. They were excited that they found the King and were excited about the things of God! They traveled for many months, and God was guiding their steps. This should cause us to ask ourselves, “Do we get excited and do we rejoice over the things of God?”

Upon arriving, we read,

“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh” (Matt. 2:11).

This verse further indicates the visit from the magi took place well after the birth of Jesus. Notice that they came “*into the house.*” Where was their house? We learn from Luke’s gospel that after Mary and Joseph went to the temple with Jesus and performed all things according to the law, they returned to the city of Nazareth (Luke 2:4,21,27,39-40). The star led them to the young Lord Jesus, and they fell down and worshipped Him because He was (is) God in the flesh (Psa. 95:6; Jn. 1:1,14).



They did not come empty handed. Three types of gifts were brought—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Tradition teaches that because there were three gifts, only three wise men visited. However, the true number of wise men is unknown. It could’ve been a large caravan of magi, especially given the distance traveled.

“These gifts or great treasures” (v. 11) had great value. Gold has been of great value throughout history. In Genesis 13:2 we read, “*And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.*” Frankincense was used to cover the smell of sacrifices (Ex. 30:7, 34-35; Lev. 2:1). Myrrh had a bitter taste (Mk. 15:23) and was used to embalm the dead as its properties helped preserve the body (Jn. 19:39-40). All three had great value, and God used these gifts to finance the family’s trip to Egypt (Matt. 2:13-18). This is a good example of God providing before they even knew they needed it! Today God often provides for believers in the same way, using members of the Body of Christ to pray and support each other (Phil. 4:18-19).

We don’t know how long they stayed, but we read in Matthew 2:12,

“And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.”

Having been warned by God of Herod’s evil intentions, they went home in another direction. The wise men came looking for the King and they found Him and worshipped! If you’re not saved, you should be looking for the Lord Jesus Christ too. The Philippian jailor asked an important question “*What must I do to be saved?*” and the answer was and is “*believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...*” (Acts 16:30-31). When you believe the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 2:8-9), you’ve found Him! 

“I and My Father Are ONE”



(Taken from episode #372
of *Transformed by Grace*)

PASTOR KEVIN J. SADLER
BBS President/Editor

The following poem, called “One Solitary Life,” was written by James Allan Francis in 1926.

“He was born in an obscure village, a child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village where he worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty. Then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never had a family. Or owned a home...He never traveled two hundred miles from the place he was born. He never...held an office. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness.

“While he was still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends deserted him. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had, his coat. When

he was dead, he was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave.

“Nineteen centuries have come and gone and today he is still the central figure for much of the human race. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as this One Solitary Life.”¹

Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, the Savior of the world, Who rose from the dead. This is the reason that His life has had such a profound impact on the history of the world.

We Want a Clear Answer!

“And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch. Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be

the Christ, tell us plainly” (John 10:22-24).

The Hebrew word translated as “dedication” is *enkainia*, or as we say today, Hanukkah. The Feast of Dedication is not out of the Mosaic Law and is not a divinely sanctioned feast. It commemorated the Jewish victory over the Syrian leader, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who persecuted Israel and polluted the temple. The feast celebrated the cleansing of the temple and its rededication by Judas Maccabaeus in 164 B.C. It was an eight-day annual feast.

It is also called “the feast of lights” because of the lighting of lamps and candles in Jewish homes during the feast in remembrance of the “miracle of the cruse of oil” for the temple’s menorah. The story of this miracle is that only a small amount of oil, equivalent to one day’s use, lasted eight days to light the menorah in the Jewish temple. There’s a joke about Hanukkah: “Imagine if your cell phone battery was on ten percent and it lasted for eight days. Congratulations. You understand Hanukkah.”² The Jews considered the victory of the Maccabean revolt

and the miracle of the oil to be acts of God.

It was December, and “winter” in Jerusalem. This account takes place three to four months before the Lord’s crucifixion and resurrection. Due to the inclement weather of that time of year, “Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch.” The word “porch” (Gr. *stoa*) means an interior portico or covered colonnade. Solomon’s porch was a covered walkway on the east side of the temple complex (Acts 3:11; 5:12), named after Solomon, who built the first temple. The long porch served as shade from the hot summer sun and shelter from the cold winter rains.

As Christ was walking on this covered porch in the temple, a crowd of Jews came up to Him and gathered around Him, literally surrounding Him. They hemmed Him in so that He would not get away from them without answering their questions. The Jews asked the Lord, “How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.” They sought a clear answer from the Lord regarding His identity and



whether He was the Christ (the prophesied Messiah), and they no longer wished to be kept in suspense.

I Told You Already

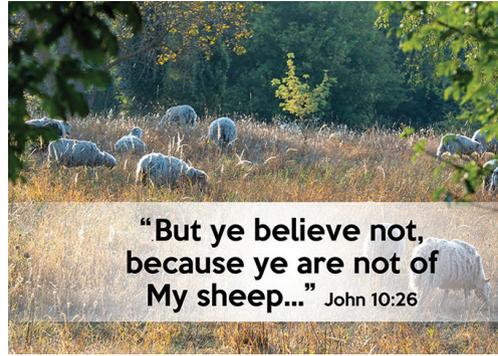
“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:25-27).

The Lord answered the demand of the crowd by saying, “I told you.” What the Lord meant by this is not that He had made a previous plain and public statement. Rather, by saying “I told you,” the Lord meant that He had revealed who He was throughout His entire three-year ministry, both in His teachings and deeds. The witness of Christ’s words and works—all that He had taught and shown by His miracles—gave clear testimony to His identity.

However, the Lord pointed out that “I told you, and ye believed not.” The proof was overwhelming, but they did not believe, and the Jews rejected Him. Thus, they did not know who He was, or if He was the Messiah, and they *had* to ask their question about His identity. They wanted a plain, yes-or-no answer when the evidence was plain to see.

Christ told them that “the works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me.”

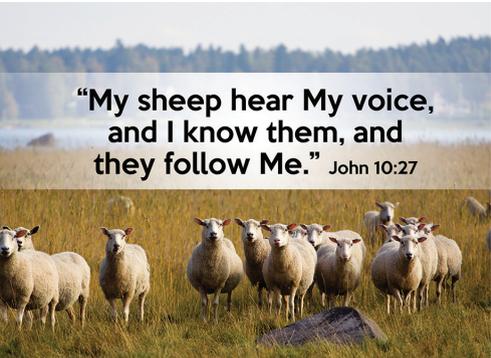
The powerful and undeniable miracles that Christ did in His Father’s name were perfectly in accord with the Father’s character and will, and bore clear witness and proof of Who Jesus Christ is—the Messiah, the Son of God. Christ proved His identity by His works.



“But ye believe not,” Christ told them, and they believed not “because ye are not of My sheep.” Since they did not believe in Christ, they did not belong to Him. If they had believed, they would have been His sheep. But these Jews had rejected the Good Shepherd; thus, they were not His sheep. They did not recognize Him, know Him, or follow Him. Their question was proof that they were not Christ’s sheep.

The Lord added, “ye are not of My sheep, *as I said unto you.*” Three months earlier, Christ had been at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, and He taught the Jews that “I am the door of the sheep” (v. 7) and “I am the good shepherd” (v. 11). In that discourse Christ taught

about His sheep knowing the voice of their Shepherd, and that the Shepherd “goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice” (v. 4). But these Jews who surrounded Him in Solomon’s porch did not know His voice, and so they were not His sheep.



“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” John 10:27

In stark contrast to them, Christ said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (v. 27). Hearing and following was the opposite response of these Jews who, in their unbelief, refused to hear and did not follow Him. His sheep, however, were those who did hear His voice—His words of life and truth—and they responded to it. They believed what He said, and they believed in Him. They recognized who He was and believed in Him as the Messiah. Knowing and believing Who He is, they then followed Him as sheep follow their shepherd.

The Clear Answer

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never

perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him” (John 10:28-31).

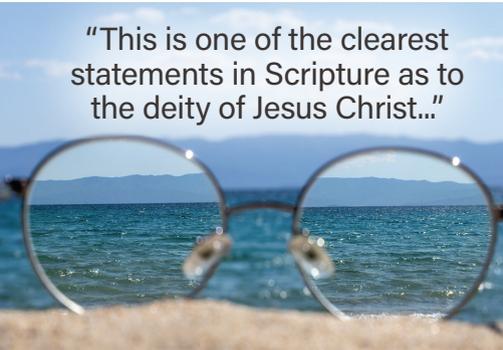
To His sheep, those who believed in Jesus Christ and followed Him, the Lord gave life and, having life, the sheep have it eternally: “That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (3:15). As God, Christ has the authority to give eternal life and, as God, He has the power to keep them eternally safe. Christ, the good Shepherd, loses *none* of His sheep. His sheep will never perish in hell and will never be lost, because no one could possibly remove them from Christ’s hand.

Christ added that His Father also stood behind the guarantee of the sheep’s security. The Father holds them in His hand as well, and He is “greater than all” (10:29). No one is stronger than the Father. He is more powerful than any foe. The Father secures the sheep by His power and protection; no person, problem, circumstance, enemy, or sin has the power to pull the sheep out of the hand of God the Father. The sheep are safe in the hand of the Son, and they are safe in the hand of the Father.

Then in verse 30, in relation to the security and protection of the sheep, and in every other thing, Christ said, “I and My Father

are one.” The Jews in Solomon’s porch had asked Christ for a plain, clear answer as to His identity (v. 24), and they got it. They said they did not want to be kept in suspense any longer, and so Christ removed any and all suspense: “I and My Father are one.”

As to all that the Father is and all that He does, and all that the Son is and all that He does, they are equal in every way. Christ said that God the Father “is greater than all” (v. 29), then He said, “I and My Father are one,” because Christ, too, is greater than all. As John the Baptist said of the Lord, “He that cometh from above is above all” (3:31).



“This is one of the clearest statements in Scripture as to the deity of Jesus Christ..”

“I and My Father are one” does not mean that Christ and the Father are the same Person. Rather, the Father and Son are two distinct Persons in the Godhead, but they are “one”: one in equality, and united perfectly in purpose, will, actions, and word. They are eternally one in nature and essence. The Son, as the Father, is God. Jesus

Christ, God the Son, is one with God the Father.

This is one of the clearest statements in Scripture as to the deity of Jesus Christ, and the Jews understood perfectly well what He was saying by it, as they stated later: “that Thou, being a man, makest thyself God” (10:33).

Earlier, when Christ made another plain statement of His deity, telling the Jews, “Before Abraham was, I am” (8:58), “then took they up stones to cast at Him” (v. 59). This is the reason we read, in chapter 10, that “the Jews “took up stones *again* to stone Him” (10:31).

These Jews did not believe Christ was Who He claimed to be and, in their rejection of Him, they believed that He was guilty of blasphemy which, under the law, carried the punishment of stoning (Lev. 24:16). Being under foreign rule of the Romans, however, the Jews did not have the right or authority to carry out capital punishment (18:31). However, in the heat of the moment, in their rage at Christ’s clear claim to be God, they took up stones to kill Him anyway.

Norman Geisler put it well when he said, “[Christ is] the only one who not only claimed to be God but proved to be God. When I compare this to all other claimants of all other religions, it’s like the poet who said the night has a thousand eyes and the day has but one; the light

of the whole world dies with the setting of the sun...

“At the midnight of human ignorance, there are a lot of lights in the sky. Noontime, there’s only one. And that’s Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Based on the evidence for Who He was, there really aren’t any competitors.

“So I cast my lot with Him—not the one who claimed wisdom, Confucius; or the one who

claimed enlightenment, Buddha; or the one who claimed to be a prophet, Muhammad, but with the one who claimed to be God in human flesh...and proved it.”³

1. James Allan Francis, *The Real Jesus and Other Sermons* (Philadelphia: [a1] Judson Press, 1926), pp. 123-124, posted December 2013, <http://www.spirituality.org/is/221/02.asp>.

2. “Funniest Hanukkah Short Jokes,” no. 2, accessed November 5, 2025, <https://jokojokes.com/hanukkah-jokes.html>.

3. Lee Strobel, excerpted from *The Case for Faith*, FaithGateway, accessed November 5, 2015, <https://faithgateway.com/blogs/christian-books/the-case-for-faith-coping>. 

Question Box



“Who returns with Christ at His Second Coming?”

“And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean” (Rev. 19:14).

Armies mounted on white horses will return with Christ. These “armies which were in heaven” are “clothed in fine linen, white and clean,” and are thus, by their apparel, associated with *the saints* who are the Lamb’s wife (cf. 19:8). Revelation 17:14 further states that, when Christ returns, at the Battle of Armageddon, “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are *with Him* are called, and chosen, and faithful.” Saints of the prophetic program and Tribulation martyrs return with Christ to reign on the earth (Zech. 14:5; Jude 1:14). All of these come with Christ from heaven at His Second Coming to partake in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6), which is their hope.

Scripture makes clear that angels also return with Christ (Matt. 25:31; 2 Thes. 1:7). However, members of the Church, the Body of Christ, are *not* of the number that return with Christ at His Second Coming. We will remain in heaven in the glorified bodies that we will have received at the Rapture (1 Cor. 15:51-54 cf. Eph. 2:6).

—Pastor Kevin Sadler



Archaeology and the Bible

KING HEZEKIAH

PASTOR DON HOSFELD
Contributing Writer

“Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them.

“And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army....

“And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?

“I say, sayest thou, (but they are but vain words) I have counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?” (Isa. 36:1-2,4-5).

The events surrounding Sennacherib’s invasion of Judea are described for us in three places in Scripture: 2 Kings 18:13-19:37, 2 Chronicles 32:1-23, and Isaiah 36-37. From these three accounts, we learn that Hezekiah, who reigned in the southern kingdom of Judah from 716-687 B.C., was what we would call a “good” king, for he “did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did” (2 Kings 18:3). In fact, we learn:

“He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.

“For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses.

“And the Lord was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not” (2 Kings 18:5-7).

Following Hezekiah’s rebellion against Assyria, Sennacherib’s response was brutal. He invaded and destroyed many cities of

Judah, much like his father, King Sargon II of Assyria, had done to the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C., leading to the exile of its people.

Built in preparation for Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem, Hezekiah's Tunnel is one of the most remarkable archeological discoveries ever made. Discovered in 1838 and combined with the Siloam Inscription (1880), which describes the moment when the two teams of workers, digging from opposite directions, finally broke through to meet in the middle, we have clear archaeological evidence that affirms the accuracy of the Bible (cf. 2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chron. 32:30).

However, these findings do not stand alone in proving the historicity of Hezekiah, or the accuracy of the Bible regarding Sennacherib's failed takeover of Jerusalem.

Hezekiah's Bulla: Discovered in a section of the Ophel (an area just south of the Temple Mount) known as the royal building, a small clay impression was found containing the words "Belonging to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz king of Judah." A bulla is a small lump of clay used in ancient times to seal documents or containers. When pressed with a signet ring or seal, it left an impression that identified the sender or owner and ensured the contents had not been tampered with. Bullae often preserve important names and titles, making them valuable archaeological artifacts.



Isaiah's Bulla: Found a mere 10 feet from Hezekiah's bulla and in the same archaeological layer, this artifact attests to the fact that they were contemporaries and likely communicated during the critical period of Assyrian threat in the late 8th century B.C., which is what we are told in Isaiah 37:1-7,21-35.



Lachish Relief: Discovered in the ruins of Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh, the Lachish Relief is a detailed stone carving that



vividly depicts the Assyrian siege and conquest of the Judean city of Lachish around 701 B.C. The panels show Assyrian soldiers storming the city, captives being led away, and spoils being carried off, offering

a rare visual account of a specific biblical event. This relief not only confirms the historical reality of the Assyrian campaign against Judah during King Hezekiah's reign but also highlights the importance of Lachish as a major fortified city second only to Jerusalem. The relief serves as a valuable archaeological witness to the events described in the Bible (cf. 2 Kings 18:17; 19:8; Isa. 36:2; 37:8).



Sennacherib's Prism: This hexagonal clay artifact was discovered in Nineveh and dates to around 691 B.C. It contains a detailed account of Sennacherib's military campaigns, including his invasion of Judah during the reign of King Hezekiah. The prism boasts of Sennacherib capturing 46 fortified cities, but notably, it does not claim the conquest of Jerusalem. Instead, it states that Hezekiah was shut up in Jerusalem "like a caged bird," implying a siege that ultimately failed. This omission aligns with the biblical account, in which Jerusalem is miraculously spared, and it provides valuable corroboration from an Assyrian royal perspective, showing that, despite overwhelming force, Sennacherib failed to take the Judean capital.

"Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria:

"This is the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him....I will defend this city to save it for Mine own sake, and for My servant David's sake.

"Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses" (Isa. 37:21-22,35-36).



HEART *to* HEART

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem...” (Luke 2:4).

This beloved Christmas carol is from the pen of one of America’s outstanding preachers of the past century, Phillips Brooks....after Brooks had returned from a trip to the Holy Land. The experience of spending Christmas Eve in Bethlehem...made an indelible impression upon the young preacher. Three years later, while pastor at the Holy Trinity Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, he was searching for a new carol for his children to sing in their Sunday School Christmas program. The still vivid memory of his Holy Land visit inspired Brooks to write this text:

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

*“How silently, how silently, the wondrous Gift is giv’n;
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His Heav’n.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.”*

Brooks gave a copy of the newly written carol to his organist and Sunday School superintendent, Lewis H. Redner, and asked him to compose a simple melody that children could sing easily. Redner was known throughout the Philadelphia area as a devoted Christian leader in Sunday School work as well as one deeply interested in church music. He struggled for a considerable time to contrive just the right tune for his pastor’s text. On the evening before the program was to be given, he suddenly awakened from his sleep and quickly composed the present melody....The carol was an immediate favorite with the children, as it has been with children and adults around the world to the present time.¹

1. Kenneth W. Osbeck, *101 Hymn Stories*, Grand Rapids, Kregal Publications, 1982, p. 187.

BBS

Letter

Excerpts



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From the United Kingdom:

(In response to the piano scam email alert) “Thank you for this warning, much appreciated, a terrible day and age of scams. I really appreciate the daily devotional you send out, and benefit much spiritually from it, God bless.”

From Florida:

“What a blessing for my husband and I to watch *Transformed by Grace*. We record each one and play them repeatedly...so many nuggets of wisdom and guidance. Thank you for making the Bible come alive. If Germantown had palm trees, we’d be there!! Meanwhile, we’re thanking God for your dedication to His glorious Word.”

From North Carolina:

“I found your devotional by chance, picked it up, started to read it and fell in love with its articles. They are so in-depth. Just my kind of study.”

From Our Inbox:

(Responding to *Two Minutes with the Bible* “Thanksgiving”) “Hallelujah, praise the Lord for He is a good and compassionate Father. I thank God for sending His One and Only Son Jesus Christ to come and die for me, my family members, and friends in the Lord.”

From YouTube:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace* “I and My Father are One”) “I have never heard a more accurate description of Who Jesus Christ is. Thank you and God bless you.”



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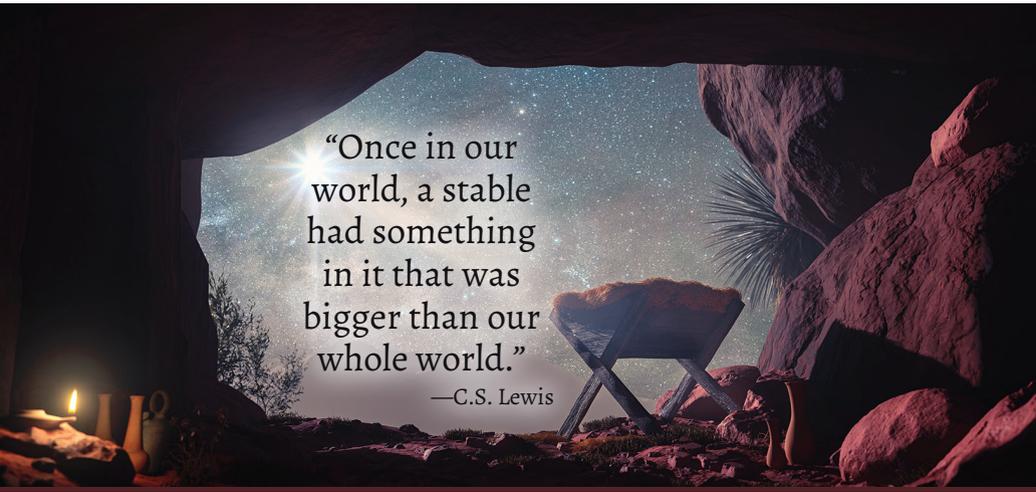
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