

# Everlasting Life

## ***The Year of New Beginnings: 2009***

### ***It's All About Jesus!!!***

Lets make 2009 the year of ***New Beginnings***. Lets forget and forgive those things of the past and start anew. Lets not worry about what happened but concentrate on a fresh start.

**Acts 2:38** lets re-baptize ourselves with repentance and the blood of Jesus and start 2009 with a fresh Christ like mind.

**(Rom 12:2)**

Lets leave the past behind as far as the east is from the west. Lets start something new this year as recommit and begin again, start a new pursue our God with passion, ferventness, and earnestness, knowing that Jesus Christ is the same Yesterday, today, and forever. **(Hebrews 13:8)**

Lets seek Lord Jesus first in every aspect of our lives. Lets keep Jesus first in our minds meditating on Him (Our Savior.) Lets instruct our children in the way of Christ. Teach them and be an example of what he wants us to be. Lets not lean onto our own understanding **(Prov. 3:5)** but keeping the Kingdom Agenda first. That is our goal right, to make it into the Kingdom of Heaven with our family and friends. Lets become the example to the world, "Jesus said I am the door" **(John 10:9)**. Lets become this New Year of beginnings the doorway to Christ and the Heavenly Kingdom.

Jesus said "He is in me is greater than he that is in the world. **(John 4:4)**" Lets pick up the cross that he bared and carry it.

**(John 19:17, Mark 8:34)** (Continued Pg 2)

## ***THE JESUS FACTOR***

***BY REV. DORIS CARTER***

TO GOD BE THE GLORY; IN ALL THINGS AND IN ALL WAYS. FOR GOD IS GOOD (ALL OF THE TIME) AND ALL OF THE TIME GOD IS GOOD; AND (JESUS IS WORTHY TO BE PRAISED).

IN THE WORLD THAT WE LIVE IN TODAY THE TRUTH IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT PEOPLE WANT TO HEAR OR BELIEVE. MANY PEOPLE OF TODAY WOULD RATHER BELIEVE A LIE RATHER THAN BELIEVE THE TRUTH. IT SEEMS AS IF NO ONE SEEMS TO CARE WHAT THEY DO TO OTHERS OR EVEN WHAT THEY DO TO THEMSELVES. YET THE SADDEST FACT OF ALL IS THE PEOPLE OF TODAY HAVE NO RESPECT OR REGARD FOR GOD, FOR THE SON OF GOD OR FOR THE WORD OF GOD.

THE POPULATION OF THE WORLD IS MORE TODAY THAN EVER BEFORE; THE EARTH IS OVER POPULATED. THERE ARE MORE ATHEIST, MORE DIFFERENT RELIGIONS, MORE DENOMINATIONS, MORE CHURCHES. IF THE TRUTH BE TOLD SO CALLED CHRISTIANS WHO WANT TO BE CALLED BY OTHER NAMES AND IT SHOULD NOT BE SURPRIZING TO KNOW ARE MORE NON CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD THAN EVER BEFORE. MORE DIFFERENT INTERPETATIONS OF THE HOLY BIBLE THAT IS AVAILABLE FOR ANYONE TO STUDY. STILL THERE ARE EVEN MORE PEOPLE CONFUSED ABOUT THE SIMPLE REQUIREMENTS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO US FOR ALL TO FOLLOW AND OBEY.

SCRIPTURE: O.T.

DEUTERONOMY 6:5-6

*AND THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THINE HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIGHT. AND THESE WORDS, WHICH I COMMAND THEE THIS DAY, SHALL BE IN THINE HEART:*

(CONTINUED ON PG 3)

VERY INTERESTING, IRAQ– by Internet

1. The Garden of Eden was in Iraq
2. Mesopotamia, which is now Iraq, was the cradle of civilization!
3. Noah built the ark in Iraq
4. The Tower of Babel was in Iraq
5. Abraham was from Ur, which is in Southern Iraq
6. Isaac's wife Rebekah is from Nahor, which is in Iraq
7. Jacob met Rachel in Iraq
8. Jonah preached in Nineveh - which is in Iraq
9. Assyria, which is in Iraq, conquered the ten tribes of Israel
10. Amos cried out in Iraq
11. Babylon, which is in Iraq, destroyed Jerusalem
12. Daniel was in the lion's den in Iraq
13. The three Hebrew children were in the fire in Iraq (Jesus had been in Iraq also as the fourth person in the Fiery Furnace!)
14. Belshazzar, the King of Babylon saw the 'writing on the wall' in Iraq
15. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, carried the Jews captive into Iraq
16. Ezekiel preached in Iraq
17. The wise men were from Iraq
18. Peter preached in Iraq
19. The 'Empire of Man' described in Revelation is called Babylon—which was a city in Iraq

And you have probably seen this one: Israel is the nation most often mentioned in the Bible. But do you know which nation is second?

It is Iraq!

However, that is not the name that is used in the Bible.

The names used in the Bible are Babylon , Land of Shinar, and Mesopotamia ... The word Mesopotamia means between the two rivers, more exactly between the Tigris And Euphrates Rivers ..

The name Iraq means country with deep roots.

Indeed Iraq is a country with deep roots and is a very significant country in the Bible.

No other nation, except Israel, has more history and prophecy associated with it than Iraq

And also, This is something to think about: Since America is typically represented by an eagle.

Saddam should have read up on his Muslim passages ...

The following verse is from the Koran, (the Islamic Bible)

Koran ( 9:11 ) - For it is written that a son of Arabia would awaken a fearsome Eagle.. The wrath of the Eagle would be felt throughout the lands of Allah and lo, while some of the people trembled in despair still more rejoiced; for the wrath of the Eagle cleansed the lands of Allah; And there was peace.

(Note the verse number!) HmMMMMMMMM?!

This is a ribbon for soldiers fighting in Iraq .

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### *Jesus the Year of New Beginnings*

We may fall, but lets get back up with His cross and carry it throughout the rest of our lives here on earth.

Lets not forget Jesus did die freely so that we could live. So lets keep Jesus and His kingdom on our hearts, mind, and soul. Lets make every word that comes out of our mouth be seasoned with the Spirit of the Lord. **(Col 4:6)** Lets freely choose to serve Him. No more procrastination, but action in doing God's will. The Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. **(Matt 26:41)** So Let's pray more, meditate more, following the Holy Spirit with out doubt knowing that Jesus is King of kings, Lord of lords, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending. Lets shout Hallelujah as we Praise Lord Jesus the Christ and our Savior.

This is the beginning of your New Life in Jesus the Christ!!!

AMEN!!!

Overseer William Henry  
Everlasting Life Ministries

(CONTINUED FROM PG. 1)

SCRIPTURE: N.T.

*MARK 12:30*

*AND THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND, AND WITH ALL THY STRENGTH: THIS IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.*

HAS SIN ABOUND SO MUCH IN OUR WORLD THAT THE SINNER MAN CHOOSES TO FOLLOW MEN INSTEAD OF TRUSTING AND BELIEVING IN GOD THE CREATOR OF MAN? WHY, ARE THERE NOT MORE PEOPLE STANDING ON THE PROMISES OF GOD.

STANDING UP FOR WHAT IS RIGHT DECENT AND IN ORDER WITH GOD. BELIEVING IN THE PRINCIPLES, PURPOSE AND GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION OFFERED THROUGH HIS SON JESUS?

"THE JESUS FACTOR" HAS THE ANSWER FOR ALL OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS AND FOR ANY OTHER QUESTIONS THAT COME BEFORE US IN LIFE.

MANY TIMES YOU GO TO A CHURCH SERVICE AND LISTEN TO THE SONGS, PRAYERS AND EVEN PREACHING AND THE NAME OF JESUS IS NEVER MENTIONED. "THE JESUS FACTOR" IS MISSING OR BEING LEFT OUT OF THE WORSHIP AND PRAISE EXPERIENCE.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT GOD HAD MOSES TO LEAD ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT AND BONDAGE. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT GOD SENT HIS SON JESUS CHRIST TO LEAD HIS PEOPLE OUT OF THE BONDAGE OF SIN. "THE JESUS FACTOR" WAS JUST AS POWERFUL WITH MOSES AT THE RED SEA AS IT IS WITH US TODAY AND WILL BE FOREVER MORE. "THE JESUS FACTOR" IS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH AND THE CONDITION OF GOD'S LOVE AND PLAN OF SALVATION.

IN THE BEGINNING WHEN GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH JESUS WAS THERE. WHEN GOD MADE MAN AND WOMAN JESUS WAS THERE. EVERYTHING THAT GOD CREATED WAS PERFECT AND EVERYTHING THAT GOD CREATED WAS GOOD AND JESUS WAS THERE. GOD THE CREATOR HAS NEVER DISAPPOINTED THE CREATURE, HOWEVER THE CREATURE (MANKIND)

HAS CONTINUOUSLY BEEN A DISAPPOINTMENT TO GOD. MANKIND WENT LOOKING FOR ANSWERS ABOUT GOD IN ALL OF THE WRONG PLACES. MANY PEOPLE STOP GOING TO CHURCH BECAUSE OF SOMETHING THEY THOUGHT SOMEBODY SAID OR SOMEBODY DID.

SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT GOD HAS FAILED THEM WHEN THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THERE IS NO FAILURE IN GOD. WHENEVER YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU AND IT'S NOT ABOUT ME IT'S ABOUT GOD. GOD WILL ALWAYS BE GOD WITH OR WITHOUT US. BUT WE ARE NOTHING WITHOUT GOD AND "THE JESUS FACTOR." WE ARE A WEAK AND WICKED GENERATION WHO HAS TOTALLY FAILED GOD BY ALLOWING PRAYER TO BE TAKEN OUT OF SCHOOL. WE STOPPED PRAYING IN OUR HOMES WITH OUR FAMILIES. WE DON'T PRAY WITH AND FOR OUR CHILDREN AND OUR CHILDREN HAS BECOME TOTALLY OUT OF HAND AND OUT OF CONTROL.

"THE JESUS FACTOR" IS THE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LOVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.

*JOHN 3:16 FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON THAT WHOSOEVER BELIVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.*

"THE "JESUS FACTOR" CONFIRMS ITSELF THROUGHOUT THE HOLY Y BIBLE AS IT TELLS ABOUT A HOLY GOD, A HOLY CHILD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

*THE OLD TESTAMENT CONTAINS  
WHAT THE NEW TESTAMENT  
EXPLAINS  
THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCEALS  
WHAT THE NEW TESTAMENT  
REVEALS*

"THE JESUS FACTOR" GIVES US ALL THAT IS NEEDED FOR MAN TO MAKE A SUCESSFUL JOURNEY FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN.

GOD LOVES US ONE AND ALL AND HE ALONE HAS GIVEN TO US A SAVIOR. NOW WE MUST GIVE OUR LIVES TO GOD BY BELIEVING AND RECEIVING HIS WORD. THE CHOICES THAT YOU MAKE

TODAY WILL DETERMINE WHERE YOUR SOUL WILL SPEND ETERNITY. THE ONLY TWO CHOICES OF DESTINATIONS WILL BE HEAVEN OR HELL THERE IS NO IN BETWEEN.

"THE JESUS FACTOR" PLACES EVERYONE BACK IN THEIR PERSPECTIVE PLACES. THEOLOGIAN YOU ARE NOT THE SPOKESMEN FOR GOD. BIBLE SCHOLARS YOU ARE NOT THE VOICE OF GOD. SEMINARIES YOU ARE NOT THE INSTRUCTORS THAT GOD HAS LEFT TO TEACH SPIRITUAL LEADERS HOW TO HUMBLY LEAD THE PEOPLE OF GOD. SOMETIMES WE CAN BECOME SO HOLY IN OUR OWN CONCEIT, THAT NOBODY CAN STAND TO BE AROUND YOU. YOU WANT TO SEPARATE YOUR YOURSELVES FROM OTHERS BECAUSE YOU THINK YOU ARE MORE HOLY THAN THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU. YOU THINK THAT YOU ARE MORE HOLY THAN GOD HIMSELF. I DON'T KNOW WHY OR HOW BECAUSE THE BIBLE TELLS US:

*ROMANS 3:23*

*ALL HAVE SINNED AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD.*

BECAUSE OF SIN MAN HAS FALLEN AWAY FROM GOD. ONLY TO BE RETURNED BACK TO GOD BY JESUS. JESUS TELLS US I AM THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE; NO MAN CAN COME UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME.

IT SEEMS NOW WE HAVE BECOME TO SMART FOR OUR OWN GOOD. AS THE OLD FOLK WOULD SAY "WE CAN'T SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES." SOME FOLK WHO HAVE READ THE BIBLE NOW THINK THEY KNOW MORE ABOUT GOD THEN GOD HIMSELF. SOME CHURCH MEMBERS FEEL THAT THEY HAVE ARRIVED (FOUND THE LORD). THEY BECOME A STUMBLING BLOCK FOR OTHERS THAT IS STILL SEEKING GOD. ALL OF A SUDDEN SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THEY CAN MAKE THEIR WAY TO GOD BY PASSING OVER JESUS. THEY ARE DETOURED BY MANY PERSONAL INTERPETATIONS AND WRONG DIRECTIONS. DELIVERANCE BEING DELAYED, SALVATION BEING BETRAYED. INSTEAD OF LEADING OTHERS TO GOD THEY ARE LEADING MANY TO DESTRUCTION AND DAMNATION.

THERE IS AN OLD SAYING:

*HOW CAN YOU TEACH, WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW.  
HOW CAN YOU LEAD, WHERE YOU CAN'T GO.*

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO BLIND FAITH AND COMPLETE OBEDIENCE TO GOD? CAN THE BLIND LEAD THE BLIND? OUR FAITH IN GOD AND BELIEF IN JESUS CHRIST IS THE WAY, THE ONLY WAY.

JESUS SPEAKS TO US WHEN HE SAYS IN:

*JOHN 14:6*

*I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE. NO MAN CAN COME TO THE FATHER BUT BY ME.*

THE JESUS FACTOR IN YOUR LIFE WILL HELP YOU APPLY YOUR FAITH IN GOD TO EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE. THERE WILL BE A GREAT CHANGE THAT WILL COME OVER YOU.

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A NEED TO ADD TO OR TO SUBTRACT ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXISTANCE OF GOD AND THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST. THE HOLY BIBLE PROVIDES ALL OF THE INFORMATION ANYONE WOULD EVER NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EVERYTHING AND ANYTHING.

I CAN JUST LOOK AT THE BRIGHTNESS IN THE SUN AND THE BLUENESS IN THE SKY AND SEE GOD'S CREATION.

NOW I HAVE THE OPPORTUNUTY TO BE A WRITER WITNESS OF GOD'S GRACE, HIS MERCY AND FOR GOD'S GREAT LOVE. TO ME IT IS AS THE SUN AND SKY TO KNOW MORE ABOUT GOD.

MORE ABOUT HOW TO BE OBEDIENT TO THE WILL OF GOD.

TO LOVE GOD, MAKES YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT GOD. TO KNOW MORE ABOUT GOD IS TO STUDY THE WORD OF GOD. TO STUDY GOD IS TO KNOW MORE AND MORE FACTS ABOUT JESUS. AS A MATTER OF FACT GOD LOVED ME BEFORE I KNEW HOW TO LOVE MYSELF. JESUS LOVES ME EVEN INSPITE OF MYSELF.

*WHERE WOULD I BE IF JESUS DIDN'T LOVE ME.*

*WHERE WOULD I BE IF JESUS DIDN'T CARE.*

*WHERE WOULD I BE IF JESUS DIDN'T SCARFICE HIS LIFE.*

*I'M GLAD SO GLAD HE DID.*

EVERYDAY OF MY LIFE I WAKE UP THANKING GOD FOR LETTING ME SEE ANOTHER DAY. NO MATTER WHAT IN A DAY OR IN A LIFE TIME THAT MIGHT BE BEFORE ME THE JESUS FACTOR IN ME WILL HELP ME TO OVERCOME ANY OBSTACLE THAT SATAN MIGHT PLACE IN MY PATH. I KNOW THAT THE JESUS FACTOR ALLOWS ME TO BE AN ENABLER AND A CONQUEROR.

GOD IS ABLE TO TAKE ME THROUGH AND GOD ALLOWS ME TO GET THROUGH ALL OF LIFE'S STORMS.

ALWAYS BE REMINDED THAT WE KNOW WHERE WE'VE BEEN;

BUT I DON'T WE DON'T KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING. ONLY GOD KNOWS WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS.

I WORSHIP GOD TODAY WITH ALL OF MY HEART AND SOUL BECAUSE I REALIZE THAT I NEED GOD IN MY LIFE. I THANK GOD FOR MY LIFE HEALTH AND STRENGTH; BUT MOST OF ALL I THANK GOD FOR JESUS.

THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS IN THIS LIFE AND IN THIS WORLD "THE JESUS FACTOR." DON'T LEAVE IT OUT OF YOUR WORSHIP AND PRAISE GIVEN TO GOD. KNOW THAT YOU CAN PRAY TO GOD AND SEAL YOUR PRAYERS IN THE NAME OF JESUS. BELIEVE AND TRUST IN JESUS AND JESUS WILL NEVER FAIL YOU. LIFE CHANGES MOMENT BY MOMENT, MANY THINGS IN OUR LIFE CAN CHANGE EVERY MINUTE OF THE DAY. YET NONE OF THE FACTS ABOUT JESUS HAS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS. THE JESUS FACTOR CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE AND HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE IN MINE.

*JOHN 1:1*

*IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD  
AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD AND WAS GOD.*

THE WORD WAS SPOKEN BY GOD AND THE WORLD CAME INTO EXISTANCE. THE ACTIVE FORCE OF THE POWERFUL WORDS OF GOD WAS IN IT'S GREATEST CREATIVE ATTRIBUTES. GOD SPOKE AND BY HIS WORD EVERYTHING THAT WAS NOT BECAME SO, WHAT A MIGHTY GOD WE SERVE.

*PSALMS 24:1*

*THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND THE FULNESS THEREOF;  
THE WORLD, AND THEY THAT DWELL THEREIN.*

THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS YOU MUST

BELIEVE IN THE WORD OF GOD, THE WILL OF GOD, AND THE WAYS OF GOD. THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE PROMISES OF GOD YOU MUST BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST.

THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS WE TRULY CAN REJOICE TODAY IN THE GOD OF OUR SALVATION. IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO BE A PART OF THAT WHOSOEVER WILL GANG, THAT BELIEVES IN GOD THE FATHER, JESUS CHRIST THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT AS ONE. WHOSOEVER WILL LOVE THE LORD LET THEM TAKE UP THEIR CROSS AND FOLLOW JESUS. WHOSOEVER WILL ARE THOSE WHO ARE NOT ASHAME TO CARRY THE BLOOD STAIN BANNER FOR JESUS.

THE SONG WRITER SAY'S

*MUST JESUS BARE THE CROSS ALONE  
AND ALL THE WORLD GO FREE?  
NO THERE'S A CROSS FOR EVERY  
ONE,  
AND THERE'S A CROSS FOR YOU.*

THE MASTER MIND OF "THE JESUS BENEFACTORS" IS GOD ALMIGHTY AND THE PERSON HE GAVE ALL POWER TO HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. THE FATHER AND THE SON WAS NOT SEPERATED IN HEAVEN AND THEY ARE NOT TO BE DIVIDED ON EARTH. THERE IS A CONNECTION AND A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND JESUS THAT EXISTED BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN. THIS RELATIONSHIP WILL CONTINUE AFTER THIS WORLD AS WE KNOW IT WILL END. THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY THAT WE CAN GET TO GOD IS BY WAY OF HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.

JESUS LET'S US KNOW OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HE AND HIS FATHER.

*JOHN 1:2-4*

*THE SAME WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD,  
ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM; AND WITHOUT HIM WAS NOT ANY  
THING MADE THAT WAS MADE.  
IN HIM WAS LIFE; AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN.*

YOU CAN OBTAIN EVERLASTING LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST GOD 'S PLAN OF SALVATION OFFERED TO ALL. IT'S TRULY A SIMPLE PLAN OF ACTION.

A. ADMIT THAT YOU ARE A SINNER AND YOU WANT TO BE SAVED

B. BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD HAS RAISED JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD.

C. CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD (THE SON OF GOD.)

THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT OUR ACTIONS HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY GOD.

*ROMANS 10:9*

*THAT IS THOU CONFESS WITH THY MOUTH THE LORD JESUS, AND SHALT BELIEVE IN THINE HEART THAT GOD HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, THOU SHALT BE SAVED.*

“THE JESUS FACTOR” PRODUCES NEW MERCIES AND A NEW FOUNDATION OF A LOVING LIFE. WE ARE NOT IN THE MEMBERSHIP CLUB BUT INSTEAD IT SHOULD TURN INTO DISCIPLESHIP. WE BECOME THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD AND HEIRS TO THE THRONE OF GOD. “THE JESUS FACTOR” ALLOWS A PERVERSE GENERATION TO TRY TO MAKE SOME SENSE OF A WORLD FILLED WITH SIN AND SORROW. LIFE’S JOURNEY CONTINUES TO PRODUCE UNCERTAINTIES DAY BY DAY. BUT WE DO NOT BECOME DESCOURAGED BECAUSE WE WALK BY FAITH AND NOT BY SIGHT.

ONCE GOD BEGIN TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO US THE HOLY BIBLE BECOMES A WAY OF LIFE FOR THE BORN AGAIN BELIEVER. BIBLICAL HISTORY AND LIFE MYSTERIES AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WILL CHANGE OUR LIFE. THE MORE WE LEARN THE FACTS ABOUT JESUS, “THE JESUS FACTOR” BEGAN TO IMPREGNATE OUR SPIRIT AND MIND AS WE BECOME NEW CREATURES BORN AGAIN CHILDREN OF GOD, THAT CHANGES OUR PERSONALITY AND OUR PURPOSE.

THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD NOW BECOMES THE CHILDREN OF GOD BY FAITH. WE SHOULD NOT BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE IS A CHILD OF GOD, BUT WE ALL ARE GOD’S CREATION.

“THE JESUS FACTOR” GIVES US OUR ADOPTION PAPERS AND NOW WE ARE REDEEMED .

*GALATIANS 4:4-5*

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, THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION OF SONS.

WITH ALL THAT HAS BEEN SAID I’M GLAD TO SAY THAT I AM SO GLAD THAT “THE JESUS FACTOR” HAS CHANGED MY LIFE.

THE YEAR 2008 HAS BEEN LIKE NO OTHER YEAR I HAVE LIVED TO SEE. SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED TO ME PERSONALLY AND THINGS THAT HAS HAPPEN IN THE WORLD. THE WHIRLWINDS OF ADVERSITIES CAN LEAVE YOU FEELING HELPLESS AND HOPELESS. BUT GOD AND “THE JESUS FACTOR” STEPPED IN AND TOOK OVER WHEN I WAS NOT ABLE TO HELP MYSELF.

MY FAITH IN GOD SEEM TO BE GETTING WEAKER AND MORE QUESTIONABLE. I PRAYED MORE THAN I EVER PRAYED BEFORE. YET I FOUND MYSELF FEELING THAT GOD WAS NOT LISTENING TO ME. WHAT HAD I DONE? WHAT WAS I DOING WRONG? WHY DID IT SEEM THAT I HAD BEEN FORSAKEN?

A LOT OF EVENTS WAS GOING ON IN THE WORLD AND AROUND ME YET I FOUND MYSELF FEELING ALONE AND FORSAKEN. MY MOTHER’S TRANSITION FROM THIS LIFE TO HER ETERNAL REST AND MY PERSONAL GREIF LEFT ME FEELING EMPTY AND ALONE. THERE WAS OTHER DISPLACEMENTS HAPPENING IN MY LIFE THAT I HAD NO CONTROL OF. EVERYTHING SEEM TO BE HAPPENING AT THE SAME TIME.

WHERE WAS MY FAITH? WHY WAS I NOT ABLE TO PRACTICE WHAT I PREACH? I PRAYED FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT GOD WAS TRYING TO TELL ME. I FOUND THE ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS WHEN I STOPPED PRAYING TO GOD AND STARTED PRAISING GOD. AFTER I STOPPED QUESTIONING GOD I WAS ABLE TO LISTEN TO GOD AS HE ASSURED ME ,“I GOT THIS MY CHILD.”

THE BIBLE TELLS ME

*HEBREWS 11:1*

*NOW FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN.*

THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THE FACTS ABOUT GOD THE FATHER AND JESUS CHRIST THE SON ARE ONE.

*EPHESIANS 4:5*

*ONE LORD , ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM*

ONE GOD THAT IS ABOVE US ALL AND IN US ALL.

ONCE YOU ARE CONNECTED THERE SHOULD ALWAYS BE A PERSONAL TESTIMONY. MY TESTIMONY IS GOD IS THE CENTER AND THE SOURCE OF MY LIFE AND JESUS CHRIST IS MY PERSONAL SAVIOR. THE REASON WHY I CAN MOST ASSURELY USE THIS PHRASE IS BECAUSE IT IS TRUE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU, BUT I DO KNOW WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR ME. FOR IF IT WASN'T FOR THE LORD BEING ON MY SIDE THERE WOULD BE NO ME AND THERE WOULD BE NO TESTIMONY THAT GOD HAS ENALBED ME TO STAND IN THE MIST OF LIFE'S STORMS. "THE JESUS FACTOR," IS REAL AND IT WILL HELP YOU INCREASE YOUR FAITH THAT NO MATTER WHAT YOU CAN MAKE IT.

BUT OFTEN I WONDER WHY IS "THE JESUS FACTOR" SO HARD FOR THE WORLD TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT? WHY DO THEOLIGIONS, ECCLESIAITES INTERPETERS, BIBLE STUDENTS, DENOMINATIONAL DIFFERENCES WANT TO CHANGE THE IMPORTANCE OF JESUS. IT SEEMS MORE AND MORE LEAVING OUT " THE JESUS FACTOR" OF GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION. THE MESSAGE OF "THE JESUS FACTOR" IS GETTING WEAKER AND WEAKER IN PRAYERS, IN PREACHING AND IN FAITH WHETHER INTENTIONAL OR NOT. THE POWER AND STRENGTH IN GOD'S CHURCHS IS DWINDLING HOPLESSLY. THE SIZES OF THE CHURCHES ARE EITHER TO BIG OR TOO SMALL BUT, "THE JESUS FACTOR" REMAINS THE SAME AS WHEN JESUS ASKED PETER,"WHO DO MEN SAY THAT I AM." PETER ANSWERED AND SAID THOU ART THE CHRIST THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

JESUS SAYS UPON THE TRUTH OF WHO JESUS IS THAT HE WILL BUILD HIS CHURCH AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT. THE GATES OF HELL IS TRYING TO DESTROY GOD'S CHURCH AND GOD'S PEOPLE.

JESUS SAY'S LOUD AND CLEARLY THAT UPON THE TRUTH OF WHO HE IS THAT CHURCH OF GOD SHALL STAND. WHEN THE BODY OF CHRIST AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD ALLOWS GOD'S WILL TO BE DONE EVERYTHING ELSE WILL FALL

INTO PLACE. "THE JESUS FACTOR" CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT BE ABANDONED, DOWN SIZED, BRIEFLY MENTIONED, OR TOTALLY LEFT OUT OF OUR WORSHIP EXPERIENCE.

"THE JESUS FACTOR" IS EXPLAINED BEST BY JESUS HIMSELF

REVELATIONS

I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA; THE BEGINNING AND THE ENDING. THAT WHICH WAS AND WILL COME

JUST ALLOW JESUS TO BE A FACTOR IN YOUR LIFE.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY THROUGH OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. THANK YOU LORD. THANK YOU JESUS.

*REV. DORIS CARTER*

*ONE IN THE SPIRIT*

*MISSIONARY MINISTRY, PATERSON, NJ*

*08/27/08*

## **Food**

*JOHN 4:31-38 TLB*

*MEANWHILE, THE DISCIPLES WERE URGING JESUS TO EAT. "NO," HE SAID, "I HAVE SOME FOOD YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT."*

*"WHO BROUGHT IT TO HIM?" THE DISCIPLES ASKED EACH OTHER.*

*THEN JESUS EXPLAINED: "MY NOURISHMENT COMES FROM DOING THE WILL OF GOD WHO SENT ME, AND FROM FINISHING HIS WORK. DO YOU THINK THE WORK OF HARVESTING WILL NOT BEGIN UNTIL THE SUMMER ENDS FOUR MONTHS FROM NOW? LOOK AROUND YOU! VAST FIELDS OF HUMAN SOULS ARE RIPENING ALL AROUND US, AND ARE READY NOW FOR REAPING. THE REAPERS WILL BE PAID GOOD WAGES AND WILL BE GATHERING ETERNAL SOULS INTO THE GRANARIES OF HEAVEN! WHAT JOYS AWAIT THE SOWER AND THE REAPER, BOTH TOGETHER! FOR IT IS TRUE THAT ONE SOWS AND SOMEONE ELSE REAPS.*

*I SENT YOU TO REAP WHERE YOU DIDNT SOW; OTHERS DID THE WORK, AND YOU RECEIVED THE HARVEST."*

*TLB*

## 4. Wise Men and the Christmas Star of Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-12)

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

<http://www.jesuswalk.com/christmas-incarnation/magi-star.htm>

*"1 AFTER JESUS WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM IN JUDEA, DURING THE TIME OF KING HEROD, MAGI FROM THE EAST CAME TO JERUSALEM AND ASKED, 'WHERE IS THE ONE WHO HAS BEEN BORN KING OF THE JEWS? WE SAW HIS STAR IN THE EAST AND HAVE COME TO WORSHIP HIM.' 3 WHEN KING HEROD HEARD THIS HE WAS DISTURBED, AND ALL JERUSALEM WITH HIM. 4 WHEN HE HAD CALLED TOGETHER ALL THE PEOPLE'S CHIEF PRIESTS AND TEACHERS OF THE LAW, HE ASKED THEM WHERE THE CHRIST WAS TO BE BORN. 5 'IN BETHLEHEM IN JUDEA,' THEY REPLIED, 'FOR THIS IS WHAT THE PROPHET HAS WRITTEN:*

*6 ' "BUT YOU, BETHLEHEM, IN THE LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE RULERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU WILL COME A RULER WHO WILL BE THE SHEPHERD OF MY PEOPLE ISRAEL." ' 7 THEN HEROD CALLED THE MAGI SECRETLY AND FOUND OUT FROM THEM THE EXACT TIME THE STAR HAD APPEARED. 8 HE SENT THEM TO BETHLEHEM AND SAID, 'GO AND MAKE A CAREFUL SEARCH FOR THE CHILD. AS SOON AS YOU FIND HIM, REPORT TO ME, SO THAT I TOO MAY GO AND WORSHIP HIM.'*

*9 AFTER THEY HAD HEARD THE KING, THEY WENT ON THEIR WAY, AND THE STAR THEY HAD SEEN IN THE EAST WENT AHEAD OF THEM UNTIL IT STOPPED OVER THE PLACE WHERE THE CHILD WAS. 10 WHEN THEY SAW THE STAR, THEY WERE OVERJOYED. 11 ON COMING TO THE HOUSE, THEY SAW THE CHILD WITH HIS MOTHER MARY, AND THEY BOWED DOWN AND WORSHIPED HIM. THEN THEY OPENED THEIR TREASURES AND PRESENTED HIM WITH GIFTS OF GOLD AND OF INCENSE AND OF MYRRH. 12 AND HAVING BEEN WARNED IN A DREAM NOT TO GO BACK TO HEROD, THEY RETURNED TO THEIR COUNTRY BY ANOTHER ROUTE." (MATTHEW 2:1-12)*



**"The Journey of the Magi" (1894) by James Jacques Joseph Tissot (French painter and illustrator, 1836-1902), oil on canvas, Minneapolis Institute of Arts.**

150 years ago John H. Hopkins, Jr. penned the words and music of this haunting carol of the wise men:

*"We three kings of Orient are bearing gifts, we traverse afar..."*

They weren't kings. We're pretty sure of that. Nor were there necessarily three of them. Nor did they go by the names Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar.<sup>1</sup> But who were they and why did they come? How do they fit into the story of Jesus' infancy?

### Who Are the Magi? (1:1)

Let's follow the story as Matthew tells it:

*"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.'" (2:1-2)*

All of a sudden an elaborate entourage from the East appears in Jerusalem at Herod's court inquiring about the birth of the "King of the Jews."

These men are described as "Wise men" (NRSV, KJV) or "Magi" (NIV). The word is *magos*, "a (Persian, then also Babylonian) wise man and priest, who was expert in astrology, interpretation of dreams, and various other occult arts."<sup>2</sup>

Where were they from? The text says "the east" (*anatolē*), the direction from which the sun rises. Where could that be? There are three main possibilities:

1. **Parthia or Persia.** The term *magoi* was first associated with the Medes and the Persians. We know that astrology flourished in this area and that the astral lore of the region was applied to royal births.
2. **Babylon.** The Babylonians or Chaldeans had a well developed interest in astronomy and astrology. A large colony of Jews remained there, so astrologers could have learned of Jewish messianic expectations. Also, *magoi* are referred to in Daniel's description of the Babylonian court.
3. **Arabia or the Syrian desert.** The gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh are associated with desert camel trains coming from Midian in northwest Arabia or Sheba in southwest Arabia. Astrology was not unknown and Jewish colonies existed in various cities.<sup>3</sup>

Which of these is most likely? We can't really say. At any rate, they were men of wisdom and learning from an exotic, far away land bringing a caravan into the capital city of the Jews, seeking a newborn king. They must have attracted attention.

### What Kind of "Star" Did They See? (1:2)

*"... and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.'" (1:2)*



"Star" (*astēr*) wasn't used in a modern scientific sense. Rather it referred to "a luminous body (other than the sun) visible in the sky, star, single star, planet."<sup>4</sup> Foerster notes, "*astēr* almost always denotes a single 'star,' whereas *astron* can also be used for a 'constellation.'"<sup>5</sup> The phrase "in the east" (NIV, KJV, *anatolē*) in verses 2 and 9 may well carry the meaning "at its rising" (NRSV), of the "upward movement of celestial bodies."<sup>6</sup> Here are some of the possibilities:

1. **A supernova or "new star."** A supernova is an explosion in an existing star that for several weeks or months gives out a great deal of light, sometimes even visible during the day. A dozen novae are discovered each year, but those visible to the naked eye are rare. There is no historical record of a supernova just before Jesus' birth date.
2. **A comet.** Throughout history, comets have captured human imagination. A comet's nucleus is made up of rock, dust, and ices. Its tail can be spectacular. The sun's radiation pressure and solar wind cause an very long tail to form, which points away from the sun. Astronomers have calculated that Halley's comet would have been visible 12-11 BC, years before Jesus' birth about 6 BC.
3. **A planetary conjunction.** Astrologers pay attention to the planets. Apparently there was a conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars that occurred in 7-6 BC, and mention seems to have been made of this in cuneiform texts. Some have gone farther. This series of conjunctions over several months took place in the zodiacal constellation of Pisces, which may have been associated with the last days and with the Hebrews. Jupiter was associated with the world ruler among Parthian astrologers. Saturn was identified as the star of the Amorites of the Syrian-Palestine region. These three indicators could have pointed to a world ruler among the Hebrews in the last days. But this is purely speculative, astrology by hindsight. Nor do we have any evidence that such a conjunction of planets would have been actually referred to as a "star."<sup>7</sup> We just don't know enough to say authoritatively exactly what the Star of Bethlehem was. There is a star spoken of in prophecy, however, in a prophecy of Balaam, the errant prophet:

*"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near.*

*A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel." (Numbers 24:17)*

The initial reference seems to be to David. Prior to Christ, Jews of the Qumran community saw this prophecy as messianic. Later Judaism considered the messianic claims of Simon bar Kochba ("son of the star," 132-135 AD).<sup>8</sup> Could the messianic expectation based on this verse among Jewish communities in the East be the basis of the Magi's interpretation of the star? We don't know.

### **Why Was Herod Disturbed? (2:3)**

*"When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him." (2:3)*

A delegation of important people coming to Jerusalem to honor the king or to worship in the temple wouldn't be uncommon. But the Magi's search for a newborn king based on an astronomical phenomenon caused quite a stir. The passive of *tarassō* means to "be troubled, frightened, terrified."<sup>9</sup> Herod was troubled because he saw this newborn as a threat to his own throne. The people were troubled because they had seen what their paranoid king had done when he felt his throne threatened. A later Roman philosopher quotes Roman emperor Caesar Augustus as joking "I'd rather be Herod's sow than Herod's son." Herod didn't eat pigs, but he murdered his sons. Afraid of intrigue among his many sons to become king, two were tried and executed by strangulation just the year before Jesus' birth -- about 7 BC.<sup>11</sup> A third was executed five days before Herod's death in 4 BC. Matthew's report of both Herod and his citizens being "disturbed" at the Magi's report rings true.

### **Where Was the Messiah to Be Born? (2:4-6)**

Herod takes the Magi's quest seriously.

*"<sup>4</sup>When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born.*

*<sup>5</sup>In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written:*

*<sup>6</sup>"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'"" (2:4-6)*

Note that the Magi came seeking "the one who has been born king of the Jews" (2:1), but Herod asked the scholars where the Messiah (Greek *Christos*) would be born (2:4). He understood immediately that this child they sought was no normal king, but the Messiah himself.

Herod wasn't a descendent of David. He was rather a Edomite (Idumean) son of a ruling family in whom the Romans had seen a talent for controlling the populace. He had been appointed governor of Galilee (47 BC) and later King of the Jews (37 BC). He realized that if a descendent of David were to rise, his reign and that of his descendents would be over. Messiah or not, this child must be destroyed.

### **Herod's Plot (2:7-8)**

*The prophet Malachi (5:2) made it clear that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the Messiah,*

so in Bethlehem the quest would continue.

"Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.'" (2:7-8)

Herod's questioning of the scholars was public, but his interrogation of the Magi is secret.<sup>12</sup> He finds out precisely<sup>13</sup> when the star appeared. Later he uses this information to slaughter all the boy babies in Bethlehem two years and under (2:16). Apparently the Magi had seen the sign two years previous.

Now Herod seeks to enlist the Magi as his secret agents: "As soon as you find him, report to me...." (2:8) He claims to desire to worship the newborn Messiah, but his real desire is assassination. "Worship" (NIV, KJV) or "pay homage" (NRSV) is *proskuneō*, literally, "kiss towards." It means "to express in attitude or gesture one's complete dependence on or submission to a high authority figure, (fall down and) worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before, do reverence to, welcome respectfully."<sup>14</sup>

### **Led by the Star (2:9-10)**

*"After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed."* (2:9-10)

It seems that they had seen the star "at its rising" (or "in the East") and had come to Jerusalem, since that is where they expected to find a newborn King of the Jews. But now the star, which seems to have disappeared for a while, now reappears and "went ahead of them." *Proagō* means "to move ahead or in front of, go before, lead the way, precede."<sup>15</sup> Finally it "stopped" (NIV, NRSV) or "stood" (KJV) over the place where the child was.

"*Histēmi*, "set, place," here means "to desist from movement and be in a stationary position, stand still, stop."<sup>16</sup>

The star that inspired their trip in the first place now leads them directly to the very home where the Christ-child dwelt.

### **Worshipping the King (2:11a)**

*"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him."* (2:11a)

By this time, presumably nearly two years after Jesus' birth, Mary and Joseph were living in a house (*oikia*<sup>17</sup>). While most nativity scenes have shepherds bumping into wise men and angels, this almost certainly was not the case. The Holy Family had left the stable and found a house. Probably Joseph had found employment as a carpenter. They had apparently decided not to return to Nazareth, perhaps because of the scandal over Mary's pregnancy prior to marriage. Even though Joseph publicly accepted the child as his own, premarital relations were considered a sin; the couple would have had to deal with considerable prejudice.

But now, outside their home, a caravan of exotic travelers has stopped. Strangely dressed men are approaching while their camels are attended by servants, while other servants are carrying gifts in their hands. Mary scurries around to straighten up while Joseph goes out to meet the strangers.

We're not told the details, of course, but when the Magi see the child, now a toddler, they bow down (*pipto*<sup>18</sup>) and worship (*proskuneō*) him. Imagine these old men, finely dressed, prostrating themselves on a dirt floor before a small child. They had seen the star and it had reappeared to guide them. These men were convinced -- rightly -- that they were standing before the Messiah, the King of the Jews. Their obeisance was fitting.

### **Offering Gifts to the King (2:11b)**

After lying prostrate for some time, they rise, perhaps at the urging of Joseph.

*"Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh."* (2:11b)

Whenever foreign dignitaries would appear before a great king they would bring gifts as a sign of obeisance and honor. "Treasures" (NIV, KJV) is probably better translated "treasure chests" (NRSV).<sup>19</sup> And as the lids were lifted, the glitter of gold and aroma of precious spices filled the room.

- **Gold**, of course, was the most precious and valued metal known. It was highly prized. It was not found in Palestine, but had to be imported from the mines of Ophir and elsewhere.<sup>20</sup>
- **Frankincense** is derived from three species of the genus *Boswellia* -- *B. carterii*, *B. papyri-fera*, and *B. thurifera* -- which grow in southern Arabia, India, and elsewhere. The gum is exuded from the incised bark in pale glittering drops. It had a bitter flavor and a strong balsamic odor when heated. The Egyptians used it for fumigation and embalming; the Israelites used it in worship in the Holy Place of the tabernacle and temple (Exodus 30:34).<sup>21</sup>
- **Myrrh** is valuable as a perfume and a constituent of sacred anointing oil (Exodus 30:23). Several shrubs produce a perfumed resinous substance described as myrrh, but the one compounded in the anointing oil was probably from *Commiphora myrrha* or perhaps *Balsamodendron myrrha*, a low thorny tree distributed across south Arabia and Ethiopia.

The sap is pleasantly scented and dries into a solid resin. It could be diluted to form a liquid cosmetic product and may have been used by Egyptians in embalming.<sup>22</sup>

These may seem inappropriate gifts for a baby, but as munificent gifts from distinguished personages appearing before a king, they would be considered quite appropriate, perhaps as specimens of the products of their country.<sup>23</sup> Later Christian writers, including John H. Hopkins, Jr. who wrote "We Three Kings," have seen significance in gold for Christ's royalty, frankincense for his deity, and myrrh for his humanity, ultimately his burial, though none of this is in Matthew's account.<sup>24</sup> I can't help think of the song "The Little Drummer Boy" (1958):

*"I have no gift to bring ... that's fit to give the King ... I played my drum for Him ... I played my best for Him ... Then He smiled at me ... me and my drum."<sup>25</sup>*

The song is popular, though the sentiment is profound. Our best, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is what we owe the King. That is what characterized the Magi's gifts.

Though the Magi's quest had brought Herod's scrutiny upon the child, these gifts were probably sold gradually to provide for the Holy Family during three years of exile in Egypt where they fled to escape Herod's wrath.

## **Disobeying Herod (2:12)**

*"And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route." (Matthew 2:12)*

Though Herod had recruited the Magi for his evil plot, God warned them in a dream not to participate, so they left the area without returning through Jerusalem, only six miles to the north. This probably bought the Holy Family a day or two of time to make good their escape.

The story concludes in 2:13-23 with Joseph being warned in a dream and that very night taking his young family -- with the treasures -- and fleeing for Egypt, out of Herod's jurisdiction and reach. It was good that they did flee rather than question God's messenger. As soon as Herod discovered that the Magi had betrayed him, in a furious rage he gave orders to kill all the male children in Bethlehem who were two years of age or under. This amounted to perhaps twenty baby boys, the first martyrs for the Messiah.

## **What Does All this Mean?**

Why does Matthew include the story of the wise men in his Gospel? There were many incidents that he chose to exclude that we find, for example, in Luke's and John's gospels. I see in this account several themes:

1. **The King Heralded by a Star.** Matthew points to the fulfillment (without saying so) of Balaam's ancient prophecy that "A star will come forth from Jacob, and a scepter will rise from Israel" (Numbers 24:17).
2. **The King Honored by Foreign Nations.** One of Matthew's themes is that Christ fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. Here the prophecy isn't cited, but only alluded to: that of foreign rulers bringing their riches to honor the King of Israel (1 Kings 10:2, 10; Psalm 72:10-11, 15; Isaiah 60:5-6, 11). This account points to Jesus' royalty as King of the Jews.
3. **Enemies of Christ Seek His Death.** Here in chapter 2 is the beginning of Jesus' enemies. Herod clearly covets Jesus' claim to be Messiah and seeks to kill him before he can become a threat. Later in Matthew's gospel the "chief priests and teachers of the law" who pointed to his birthplace in Bethlehem conspire to take his life. And ultimately he is crucified for this very charge of being King of the Jews (Matthew 27:11, 37; John 18:33-37; 19:19-22).
4. **Explanation of Jesus' Infant Sojourns.** From Nazareth to Bethlehem, from Bethlehem to Egypt, and then back to Nazareth where he was raised -- Jesus' journeys as an infant needed an explanation in the face of Jewish belittling him as a citizen of Nazareth (John 1:45-46), not from the royal city of Bethlehem.
5. **The Gospel to the Gentiles.** This account also points to another important theme -- that Jesus came to the Jews, but had a mission beyond Israel to the Gentiles (Genesis 12:3; 22:18; 28:14; 49:10; Psalm 22:27; 98:3; Isaiah 49:6; 66:19) In parable (Matthew 21:33-44; 22:2-13), action (Matthew 8:5-13), prophecy (Matthew 24:14), and command (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8), Jesus underscores that the gospel must be preached to -- and will be embraced by -- the Gentiles.
6. **Devotion by Men of Wisdom.** That wise men recognize the Messiah and bow at his feet is also an example to "the wisdom of this world" (1 Corinthians 2:6).

**The Sovereignty of God.** Finally, we see in Joseph an **obedient servant of God, who hears the angel's warnings in dreams and takes immediate action to protect the Christ-child in his charge. Though the powers of this world may array themselves against the Christ and his people, God is fully able of protecting and preserving them until they have completed their mission. The gifts of the wise men serve to honor the boy-King and to provide for his shelter for years to come. Where one door closes, another opens. God provides!**

*(Continued on Pg 12)*

*(Continued from Pg 11)*

### **Prayer**

Father, thank you for letting us hear the story of the Magi who knelt before you with devotion and brought you rich gifts. Let us have that kind of wisdom, that we may bring before you with extravagant worship the gifts you have given to us. We love you, Lord Jesus. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.

### **Key Verses**

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.'" (Matthew 2:1-2)

"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh." (Matthew 2:11)

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### **'You Love Me'**

**Since the day I was created in your thoughts  
LORD, I had tempted you.**

**Even before I was conceived on this earth LORD,  
I had mocked you.**

**When I was born, and while in me your love was  
poured, I had already betrayed you.  
And still you loved me.**

**During my infant years You provided for me  
Christ,**

**Even though I ridiculed You.**

**You did great things, Kept me in Your grace  
Christ, Yet I tried to manipulate You.**

**As you took away all the hurt from my cries Your  
name I used in vain.  
And still you loved me.**

**As a child growing up, wanting to save humanity,  
God, I rebelled against You.**

**Going to church wanting to know about heaven,  
God, I tried to deceive You.**

**In my innocence proclaiming, "I Love You a Lot!"  
I'd already neglected you. And still, you loved  
me.**

**You loved me way before I came to be, Even  
though those wicked things you knew I'd do.  
For it was Your might, yes, it was Your will,  
To create me knowing I'd turn my back on you.**

**Why go through all the trouble Lord Almighty,  
Just to see me in my treacherous ways?**

**Why go through all the pain I've caused You,  
If my thanks are to insult You everyday?**

**Why?...**

**Because, You love me.**

**I embraced You as my Savior, Christ,  
It is You whom my heart searches for,  
But in my arrogance Lord, I rejected You;  
Yet, I am the one You still adore.**

**As I look back and reflect on,  
The journey life has taken me through.  
You always held Your hand out to hold me.  
Even during the times I abandoned You.**

**Why?...**

**Because You love me.**

**Now I understand you chose to be my strength,  
During those moments of my greatest weakness.  
It is with complete sincerity my Lord,  
I humbly ask for your forgiveness.  
I acknowledge You were there from the  
beginning.**

**I know for certain, You will be there in the end.  
Though I'll be sinful till the day I see Your face,  
Know I've accepted You and I love You,  
Amen**

**Brother Andrew Bernal  
Big Spring, TX**

### ***Forrest Gump goes to Heaven by Internet***

The day finally arrived. Forrest Gump dies and goes to Heaven. He is at the Pearly Gates, met by St. Peter himself. However, the gates are closed, and Forrest approaches the gatekeeper. St. Peter said, "Well, Forrest, it is certainly good to see you. We have heard a lot about you. I must tell you, though, that the place is filling up fast, and we have been administering an entrance examination for everyone. The test is short, but you have to pass it before you can get into Heaven."

Forrest responds, "It sure is good to be here, St. Peter, sir, but nobody ever told me about any entrance exam. I sure hope that the test ain't too hard. Life was a big enough test as it was."

St. Peter continued, "Yes, I know, Forrest, but the test is only three questions":

First: What two days of the week begin with the letter T?  
Second: How many seconds are there in a year?  
Third: What is God's first name?"

Forrest leaves to think the questions over. He returns the next day and sees St. Peter, who waves him up, and says, "Now that you have had a chance to think the questions over, tell me your answers." *(Continued on Pg 14)*

The Shepherd's Crucible  
By Minister Debbie Price  
([Psalms 23](#))

Introduction: All my life I have heard that Jesus is the Good Shepherd and I am one of the dumb sheep. I accept that. I know I need protection. I know that I can make some really dumb decisions. What occurred to me for the first time last week is that the sheep also get sheared and eaten! Their lives are preserved by the shepherd so that they can in turn give up their lives for others. Why don't we discuss that part of the sheep analogy? Is it because we don't want to, or because the focus of the illustration is elsewhere? Let's dive into our study today and find out what Psalms 23 has to say about the sheep story!

**1. My Shepherd**

1. Read [Psalms 23:1-3](#). Who wrote these verses? (King David - who grew up as a shepherd.)

1:a When you think of King David, do you think of him as a "sheep?" (No. I think of him as a great warrior-king.)

1:b Why do you think he thought of himself as God's sheep? What characteristics of the shepherd/sheep arrangement does he mention in these verses? (The shepherd takes care of the sheep's needs.)

1:c The mention of water and grass make it seem that God takes care of our essentials. Why does David refer to "paths of righteousness?" (Read [John 21:15-17](#). It is likely that David is only referring to spiritual food and water.)

1:d When David refers to spiritual nourishment, is he telling us God will make us great theologians if we stick with Him?

1:e What does he mean when he refers to having his "soul" restored? (Notice the terms used: "green" pastures, "quiet" waters and "he restores my soul." David is writing about that aspect of spirituality which gives us peace, confidence, rest and joy.)

1:f Why does [Psalms 23:3](#) say that God does this? (For His name's sake. A calm, confidence, peaceful demeanor on our part in the storms of life brings glory to our God.)

1:g What stake does a shepherd have in his sheep? (A shepherd who let his sheep get injured and go hungry would develop a poor reputation. God is concerned about His reputation.)

1:h Notice that the sheep must be "made" to lie down in green pastures and be "led" by quiet waters. What does that suggest about our attitudes in life? (That peace, confidence, rest and joy are not natural.)

1:j What does this suggest about following the natural desires of our heart?

1:k Do you sometimes feel that you are the only one who has gone through the kind of emotional and spiritual problems that you face? That no one else can really understand your situation? What does this analogy to "paths of righteousness" suggest about you being a pioneer in unhappiness? (If you are "off the path" that God has in mind for you, then you may be treading new ground. But, a "path," is a place where many others have walked before. In problems, God has a spiritual "green place" for you that has worked for many others.)

2. Read [Psalms 23:4](#). What does the phrase "valley of the shadow of death" bring to mind? (A valley is a low spot. A shadow is dark. It lacks light. On the other hand, a shadow is not the real thing. My shadow is simply a dark representation of me. This seems to be a situation in which I am very low, I have trouble seeing the light, and my dark outlook makes me think that my death is at hand, even though it is not.)

2:a We just painted a terrible picture. Why would the sheep in that situation not fear? (God is with us.)

2:b As far as I can tell, King David suggests that two sticks give us comfort. How do you understand this "two stick" theory?

*(Continued on Pg 14)*

*(Continued From Pg 13)*

2:c Read [Leviticus 27:32](#). What was one use of the shepherd's rod? (To count the sheep. God knows about you. He counts you as one of His. That gives you confidence in the face of apparent death.)

2:d Read [1 Samuel 17:40](#). With what did David face Goliath? (His staff and five stones. A staff was a weapon the shepherd could use against intruders. Thus, the two stick theory is that God counts us as His, and He stands ready to protect us against intruders.)

2:e Let's stop a minute and revisit my introduction. The sheep (at least some of them) are ultimately headed for the cooking pot. Why should we take confidence in a shepherd who oversees that process? (Read Hebrews 13:5-6. The Good Shepherd knows us, He protects us, and nothing happens to us without His consent. If we love and trust Him, that gives us confidence about the future. Note also that King David, when he compares God to a shepherd, does not spend any time on the cooking pot side of things. Instead, he focuses on the care and protection given by the shepherd.)

## **2. My Cook**

1 Read [Psalms 23:5](#). Have you ever seen a dog who eats in the presence of another dog? How does the eater act? (This is not always true, but often the dog who is eating eats quickly and defensively so that the other dog will not steal his food.)

1:a What is David saying to us in this verse? Are we eating quickly and defensively? (No. This is not a quick meal. God prepares a "table" - a big spread of food - right in front of my enemies. Normally, this would make you nervous. The picture is that God laughs at our enemies. He puts us in a place in which we can ignore them to such a degree that it is comfortable to eat.)

1:b Read [Luke 7:46](#). To what custom is David referring when he says God "anoints my head with oil?" (This is a sign of blessing and favor.)

1:c Just as you might expect, a sheep is not good at holding his cup steady. Is that the meaning of "my cup overflows?" (No. God gives more blessings than we can comfortably handle.)

## **3. My Future**

1: Read [Psalms 23:6](#). There are several references in Psalms 23 to negative circumstances. You have a soul that needs restoration (v.3), you walk through "the valley of the shadow of death" (v.4), there is "evil" around(v.4), you have need for comfort (v.4), and there are nearby enemies (v.5). What kind of life does that suggest the sheep would be living without the shepherd?

1:a What kind of life does the sheep who confidently follows the Good Shepherd live? (A life filled with goodness and love.)

1:b What, ultimately, is the fate of the sheep who are with the Good Shepherd - the cooking pot? (No! We are God's house guests for eternity!)

Friend, we are on the journey of life. Problems are all around us. Would you like to take that journey in the presence of the Good Shepherd? Would you like the peace of mind that His presence brings? Would you like to know that at the end of this journey you will live in His presence forever? Give up your sins and give your heart to Him today. Sign up to be one of His sheep - one who avoids the cooking pot!

Next Month: The Crucibles That Come.

Definition: Crucible (kroo se bel), A severe, searching test.

*(Forest Grump continued from Pg 12)*

Forrest replied, "Well, the first one - which two days in the week begins with the letter "T"? Shucks, that one is easy. That would be Today and Tomorrow."

The Saint's eyes opened wide and he exclaimed, "Forrest, that is not what I was thinking, but you do have a point, and I guess I did not specify, so I will give you credit for that answer.

How about the next one?" asked St. Peter. "How many seconds in a year? Now that one is harder," replied Forrest, but I think and think about that, and I guess the only answer can be twelve." *(Continued on Pg 15)*

**Birthdates and Events of:**

**JANUARY**

- 4th BD: Sis. Michelle Johnson
- 6th BD: Bro. Deshawn Moore. Jr. \*
- 10th BD: Joseph Jackson
- 11th BD: Kiante Covington \*
- 12th BD: Aha Simmons \*
- 15th BD: Zhane Covington
- 18th BD: Evang. Debora Brooks
- 19th Dr. Martin Luther King Service By  
Overseer Henry @ 6:00pm  
BD: Davontay Johnson \*
- 20th BD: Evangelist Dorothy Askew
- 26th BD: Evang. Inescha Horne

**FEBRUARY**

- 4th Anniversary, Jon & Regina Townsend
- 7th BD: Jeffery Robinson Jr.
- 8th BD: Evang. Robin Bundy
- 14th Valentine's Day
- 15th BD: Deacon Michael Henry
- 16th President's Day
- 17th BD: Allison Williams
- 18th BD: Linwood Jerome Bugg Jr.
- 22nd BD: Jahlil Yates \*
- 23rd BD: Anaya Melvin \*  
BD: Sis. Tanishia L. Green

***Women's Convocation:***

AhhP, Paterson, 7:00pm

- Feb. 26, Thurs, Prophetess Laura Robinson
- Feb. 27, Fri. Pastor Pricilla Gunn, of Haven of Hope & Deliverance, South Jersey
- Feb. 28, Sat. Pastor Pricilla Huff, of Vision of Promise, Lakewood, NJ

*(Forest Grump continued from Pg 14)*

Astounded, St. Peter said, "Twelve? Twelve? Forrest, how in Heaven's name could you come up with twelve seconds in a year?"

Forrest replied, "Shucks, there's got to be twelve : January 2nd, February 2nd, March 2nd, April 2nd, May 2nd.... "

"Hold it," interrupts St. Peter. "I see where you are going with this, and I see your point, though that was not quite what I had in mind... but I will have to give you credit for that one, too.

Let us go on with the third and final question. Can you tell me God's first name"?

"Sure," Forrest replied, "it's Andy."

*(Continued on Pg 20)*

Daily Scripture Reading:  
Read the Holy Bible in a Year.

***January***

1. ΔLk 5:27-39 ΔGen 1-2 ΔPs 1
2. ΔLk 6:1-26 ΔGen 3-5 ΔPs 2
3. ΔLk 6:27-49 ΔGen 6-7 ΔPs 3
4. ΔLk 7:1-17 ΔGen 8-10 ΔPs 4
5. ΔLk 7:18-50 ΔGen 11 ΔPs 5
6. ΔLk 8:1-25 ΔGen 12 ΔPs 6
7. ΔLk 8:26-56 ΔGen 13-14 ΔPs 7
8. ΔLk 9:1-27 ΔGen 15 ΔPs 8
9. ΔLk 9:28-62 ΔGen 16 ΔPs 9
10. ΔLk 10:1-20 ΔGen 17 ΔPs 10
11. ΔLk 10:21-42 ΔGen 18 ΔPs 11
12. ΔLk 11:1-28 ΔGen 19 ΔPs 12
13. ΔLk 11:29-54 ΔGen 20 ΔPs 13
14. ΔLk 12:1-31 ΔGen 21 ΔPs 14
15. ΔLk 12:32-59 ΔGen 22 ΔPs 15
16. ΔLk 13:1-17 ΔGen 23 ΔPs 16
17. ΔLk 13:18-35 ΔGen 24 ΔPs 17
18. ΔLk 14:1-24 ΔGen 25 ΔPs 18
19. ΔLk 14:25-35 ΔGen 26 ΔPs 19
20. ΔLk 15 ΔGen 27:1-45 ΔPs 20
21. ΔLk 16 ΔGen 27:46-28.22 ΔPs 21
22. ΔLk 17 ΔGen 29.1-30 ΔPs 22
23. ΔLk 18:1-17 ΔGen 29:31-30:43 ΔPs 23
24. ΔLk 18:18-43 ΔGen 31 ΔPs 24
25. ΔLk 19:1-27 ΔGen 32-33 ΔPs 25
26. ΔLk 19:28-48 ΔGen 34 ΔPs 26
27. ΔLk 20:1-26 ΔGen 35-36 ΔPs 27
28. ΔLk 20:27-47 ΔGen 37 ΔPs 28
29. ΔLk 21 ΔGen 38 ΔPs 29
30. ΔLk 22:1-38 ΔGen 39 ΔPs 30
31. ΔLk 22:39-71 ΔGen 40 ΔPs 31

***February***

1. ΔLk 23:1-25 ΔGen 41 ΔPs 32
2. ΔLk 23-26-56 ΔGen 42 ΔPs 33
3. ΔLk 24:1-12 ΔGen 43 ΔPs 34
4. ΔLk 24:13-53 ΔGen 44 ΔPs 35
5. ΔHeb 1 ΔGen 45:1-46:27 ΔPs 36
6. ΔHeb 2 ΔGen 46:28-47:31 ΔPs 37
7. ΔHeb 3:1-4:13 ΔGen 48 ΔPs 38
8. ΔHeb 4:14-6:12 ΔGen 49-50 ΔPs 39
9. ΔHeb 6:13-20 ΔEx 1-2 ΔPs 40
10. ΔHeb 7 ΔEx 3-4 ΔPs 41
11. ΔHeb 8 ΔEx 5:1-6:27 ΔProv 1
12. ΔHeb 9:1-22 ΔEx 6:28-8:32 ΔProv 2

## Lessons on The Cosmic Conflict Between Christ & Satan

By Bruce Cameron: [gobible.com](http://gobible.com)

### Satan Vs Jesus Lesson 3 of 13

#### *The Contenders*

(Philippians 2, 1 Thessalonians 5,  
1 John 2, 2 Corinthians 4)

Introduction: Have you ever watched a boxing match? When I have seen world championship matches on television, they tell us how much each contestant weighs, how tall he is, the length of his arms and how he has done in prior matches. To give us some kind of idea of what kind of person the boxer is, they generally do some sort of interview. This Month our lesson looks at the two contenders for the championship of our world: Christ and Satan. Since we learned that we are part of the battle between good and evil, this fight is personal. So, let's jump in and see what we can learn about each of these contenders!

#### **1. Attitudes of the Contenders**

1:a Read [Philippians 2:5-8](#). If you were promoting Jesus, which one of His qualifications would especially catch your eye? (Verse 6 tells us He is "in very nature God!")

1:b How would you feel about yourself if you were God?

1:c What kind of attitude does Jesus have?

1:d What does it mean (v.8) to "become obedient to death?"

1:d Is this the attitude you would expect of Jesus?

2. Read [Isaiah 14:13-14](#). What kind of attitude does Satan possess?

3. Compare the attitudes of the two contenders? (They are diametrically different. Jesus, who has the right to have an "attitude," does not. Satan, who did not have the right to have an "attitude," did.)

3:a If you drew an "attitude line" between Jesus and Satan, with the Jesus side being the extreme in humility,

and the Satan side being the extreme in pride, where would you be found on that line?

4. Let's go back and look at [Philippians 2:5](#) again. If we are on Jesus' side, whose attitude should be ours?

4:a Is this an attitude that you often see either in the church or in the world? If not, why not?

5. Read [Philippians 2:9-11](#). What was the final result of Jesus' humility? If you are looking to be exalted, is this the blueprint, the plan, to follow? Or, have you violated the blueprint if you set exaltation as your final goal?

6. Nothing we learn from the Bible does us any good unless we apply it to our daily living. Let's look at Philippians 2:5-7 again. Does this apply to our marriage? (Ephesians 5:24-25) Does this apply to our work? ([Luke 14:8-11](#)) Does this apply to our relationships in church? ([Romans 12:3-5](#))

6:a Are your marriage, work or church relationships in need of reformation?

#### **2. Contenders and Light**

1. Read [1 Thessalonians 5:4-6](#). The Bible consistently equates God with light and Satan with darkness. What does our text in Thessalonians suggest is the practical difference between light and darkness? (We can see things in the light, but have trouble seeing them in the dark. This text suggests that we "see," we understand, God's will and His plan for the future.)

2. Read [2 Corinthians 4:6](#). How is Jesus, in a practical way, "light?" What does the text mean when it refers to the "glory of God in the face of Jesus?" (This is a very important concept. Jesus is called "light" because He helps us to "see" His Father. Satan is "dark" because he does not want us to understand God's love or character. The reference to the "glory of God in the face of Christ" is a glorious way to say we see God the Father when we behold Jesus!)

3. Read [2 Corinthians 4:7](#). What role do we play when it comes to light? Do you find yourself described in this text?



(Yes. We are the "jars of clay" who possess the "treasure" of this light.)

3:a If our "treasure" and our "light" is understanding God through the record of what Jesus did here, how important is your study of the Bible? (To know and understand God better, is to have light. To fail to study God's word is to be in darkness. The choice is yours.)

4. Is there some part of your life that you would prefer to keep hidden? Where does that suggest you currently stand in the contest between darkness and light? (If we have some activity that we prefer not to have others know about, this is a tip-off that we need to carefully review whether our activity is pleasing to God. After all, Jesus is aware of all of our actions. How does it make any sense not to want others to know when the judge knows? At the same time there is a place for what I call "sanctified hypocrisy" - see [Romans 14:22](#) and its context.)

### **3. Contenders: Christ and Anti-Christ**

1. Read [1 John 2:18](#), 22-23. I was recently cross-examining a witness in one of my religious liberty cases. He contended my client was not entitled to a religious accommodation because he thought my client should have to prove the truth of his religious beliefs. The rule of law in the U.S. is that you cannot be required to prove the truth of your religious beliefs. To try to show his view was ridiculous, I asked this witness about the term "anti-Christ." He had no idea what the term "anti-Christ" meant. What does John tell us the term "anti-Christ" means? (Someone who denies that Jesus is the Christ.)

1:a Is there just one anti-Christ? (Verse 18 says "the anti-Christ" is coming, but many more have come.)

1:b It is common among more conservative Christian denominations to see other Christian denominations as the "anti-Christ?" What do these verses suggest about the nature of the anti-Christ?

1:c Would it be a better "fit" with these verses to look for a religious "anti-Christ" that actually denied that Jesus was the Christ?

1:d What religion(s) fit that description? (Islam immediately comes to my mind. I am not an expert on Islam, but beginning a few years ago I started reading the Quran (Koran) and doing some study of its teachings. The Quran acknowledges Jesus, but does not accept Him as God or Savior.)

1:e Has the anti-Christ come to America? Has it come to Christianity in general?

### **4. Contenders: Gathering vs. Scattering**

1. Read [John 10:11-13](#). We've got four things to identify in this story: the shepherd, the wolf, the sheep and the hired hand. Who or what does one each represent? (Jesus says in v.11 that He is the shepherd. The wolf is Satan. We are the sheep. The hired hand is your pastor or priest. (Allow a rebuttal time if your pastor or priest is in the audience.))

1:a What does this story say about us -- when it calls us "sheep?" (It says we are vulnerable. We are heavily influenced by the shepherd or the wolf.)

1:b What is the goal of the shepherd? (To keep the sheep together and safe. He is willing to give up His life for that.)

1:c What is the goal of the wolf? (To kill the sheep and scatter them.)

1:d If you were a sheep, would it make any sense to side with the wolf? (He would undoubtedly, ultimately eat you!)

1:e If someone is tearing apart your church, whose work does that person reflect?

1:f What is the problem with the hired hand? (He is doing it only for money. For that reason, I assume your pastor or priest does not actually fall into the category of a true hired hand.)

1:g Are there members of your church who are members only for the "money," the success in life, the blessings? How about you?

*(Continued on Pg 19)*

Comprehensive Bible Study  
Used for Sunday Morning Bible School  
And a Daily Bread for the month of January  
By David Cook

January 4, 2009

***Always the Best Choice***

‘Pharaoh Oppresses the Hebrew People’  
Exodus 1:8-14  
‘The Hebrew Midwives Disobey Pharaoh’  
Exodus 1:15-21

***Prepared to Make the Best Choice***

There are those decisions we are forced to make at the demand of some unforeseen situation, like that of the midwives. What do we do when there is no way to plan ahead and no way around the decision? The answer is simple, but it may not be easy: We obey God. We do what’s right and trust God with the Outcome. It’s scary, perhaps, but it’s going to be all right, for God is faithful and is able to deliver His children from any threat, any harm, any authority in this world.

***Key Verse:***

But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. Ex 1:17

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

Mon. Joshua 1:10-18, The Courage of Faith.  
Tues. Hebrews 11:23-31, Rahab’s- Example of Faith.  
Wed. Joshua 2:8-11, Rehab’s Declaration.  
Thurs. Joshua 2:15-21, Rehab’s Agreement.  
Fri. James 2:21-26, Rehab’s- Righteous Because of Her Actions.  
Sat. Matthew 1:1-6, Rahab’s Legacy- A King!  
Sun. Joshua 2:1-4, 12-14; 6:22-25, Rahab’s Protection.

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January 11, 2009

***Risky Business***

‘Rahab’s Risky Action’  
Joshua 2:1-4  
‘Rahab’s Risky Request’  
Joshua 2:12-14  
‘Rahab’s Reward’  
Joshua 6:22-25

***Pull the Ripcord!***

At some point, Rahab decided to pull the ripcord of faith, and once she did, she was no disappointed. You will not be disappointed either as you pull your own ripcord of faith.

***Key Verse:***

*Josh 2:11-12*

*And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.*

*Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:*

*Joshua 2:11-12*

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

Mon. Exodus 17:8-16, Military Leader.  
Tues. Numbers 14:6-10, Optimistic Spy.  
Wed. Numbers 27:12-23, Moses’ Successor.  
Thurs. Deuteronomy 31:1-8, Moses’ Charge to Joshua.  
Fri. Deuteronomy 31:1-8, The Spirit of Wisdom.  
Sat. Joshua 1:1-9, The Lord Is with You.  
Sun. Joshua 3:1-13, Joshua’s Leadership Affirmed.

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January 18, 2008

***Over and Above***

‘Preparation for Crossing the Jordan’  
Joshua 3:1-4  
‘Faith for Crossing the Jordan’  
Joshua 3:5-13

***A New Level***

The phrase “ the Lord is taking me to another level” became quite popular around 2004 in some African-American Churches. Israel Houghton and his musical group Israel and New Breed produced a CD in 2004 called *Live from Another Level*. Each song on the disc encourages believers to think about moving closer to God, doing more for Him, and following Him in absolute obedience. Worship songs like “Breathe into Me,” “Here I Am to Worship,” and Going to Another Level”

Motivate the listener to allow God to elevate him or her to a different plane.

Key Verse:

*And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. Joshua 3:7*

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS**

Mon. Numbers 6:1-8, Special Vows to the Lord.

Tues. Judges 2:1-5, Disobeying God.

Wed. Judges 2:6-10, A New Generation.

Thurs. Judges 2:11-17, Results of Unfaithfulness.

Fri. Judges 2:18-23, Judges Raised Up by God.

Sat. Judges 13:15-23, An Offering to the Lord.

Sun. Judges 13:1-13,24, The Promise of a Son.

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January 25, 2008

***Be Prepared***

‘Announcement of Samson’s Birth’

Judges 13:1-5

‘Instruction for Samson’s Upbringing’

Judges 13:6-7a, 8-13a, 24

***God Calls, God Prepares***

Sister Caldwell grew up in the south, in a different time. “We didn’t have a microwave to thaw out a chicken. If I had to fry chicken the next day, I had to be sure I had everything ready to go. We only went to the grocery store in town once a month. Mamma gave me the job of checking every jar and sack in the pantry to make sure every item that we needed for the month was on the list.”

Sadly, “fast food religion” is often dished up before people, some of whom are extremely hungry for a well-prayed-over, prepared meal from God.

Key Verse:

For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Judges 13:5

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS**

Mon. 1 Kings 19:15-21, The Call of Elisha.

Tues. 2 Kings 2:9-15, The Prophet’s Mantle.

Wed. 2 Kings 4:27-37, Elisha’s Prayer for a Child.

Thurs. 2 Kings 13:14-20, The Death of Elisha.

Fri. Luke 4:23-30, Jesus Speaks of Elisha.

Sat. Luke 6:27-36, Welcoming a Prophet.

Sun. 2 Kings 4:8-17, Blessed by Blessing.

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***(Continued from Pg 17)***

2. Let's read on. Read [John 10:14-16](#). Jesus says His sheep know Him. How do we know Jesus?

2.a Jesus says again in these verses that He lays down His life for His sheep. How does that contrast with the goal of the wolf?

2.b What does verse 16 suggest is the goal of the gospel? (Bringing in other sheep so that there is "one flock and one shepherd.")

3. Friend, do you see a "theme" with our Contender? He is humble, concerned, caring, obedient to the point of being willing to die for us. Satan, on the other hand, is proud, arrogant, and willing to take our life to advance his claims. How do you line up between these two contenders? Who do you choose today?

*Next Month: The War Comes to Earth*

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***John 14:10-12***

***Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.***

***Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.***

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*(Forrest Grump continued from Pg 15)*

"Andy?" exclaimed an exasperated and frustrated St Peter. "Ok, I can understand how you came up with your answers to my first two questions, but just how in the world did you come up with the name Andy as the first name of God?"

"Shucks, that was the easiest one of all," Forrest replied. "I learnt it from the song":  
"ANDY WALKS WITH ME, ANDY TALKS WITH ME, ANDY TELLS ME I AM HIS OWN.."

St. Peter opened the Pearly Gates, and said:

***"Run Forrest, Run!"***

Give me a sense of humor, Lord.  
Give me the ability to understand a clean joke,  
To get some humor out of life,

***THE FOUR BLESSED LOOKS***

***Look back and 'Thank' God.  
Look forward and 'Trust' God.  
Look around and 'Serve' God.  
Look within and 'Find' God!'***



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