



Berean Watchmen  
Ministries

November - December 2009

Volume 3, Issue 6

# The Watchmen

THE VOICE FROM THE WALL

## Inside:

- "Santa or Jesus?"
- Signs of the Times – Pt III
- Letters from Readers
- Current Events in Light of Bible Prophecy

## Individual Highlights:

The Reason for the Season	1
Signs of the Times – Pt III	5
Santa or Jesus?	8
News Bites	10
Letters from our Readers	12

## The Reason for the Season

'Tis the season for remembering, but what is it that we are to remember?

For many it is the remembering of Christmases past; times of good cheer and family and friends. But even in cheer is the overshadowing presence of all the societal pressures of the season which all but erase the true *reason for the season*. Having a 'Merry Christmas' has slowly, but effectively, been replaced with the neutral words of 'Happy Holidays'; and the world pays no heed to the change. Gone are the days of quiet reflection and awe, and instead are the days of hustle and bustle, silver bells and noise. The once silent night has in decades past been callously replaced by rockin' around the Christmas tree.

Even for those who remember it has something to do with the birth of God's Son long ago in Bethlehem, the memory remains somewhat in the background of all else that is going on. Like other legends and tales of lore, the reason for the season has all but been forgotten or reduced to a mere bedtime story. We have decorations of trees and lights, school plays and musicals, music and song, parties and gatherings, and all kinds of snacks and goodies to make our belt lines jolly. All this we do for the sake of tradition, and we're not even sure why we do it - beyond the basic understanding that we always have.

What makes this time of year a celebration anyway? What's so special about December 25th that causes us all to stop our normal lives to decorate, buy gifts and spread cheer?

### A Child is born

For the Christian, this time of year is a wonderful celebration of hope, faith and encouragement. Amongst the hustle

and bustle of the secular celebration of 'Happy Holidays', Christians call to remembrance that 2000 years ago, in fulfillment of perfect prophecies, a child was born to a virgin. This child was to be called Immanuel, "God with us", and is the real reason why we traditionally celebrate Christmas. And more importantly, even though (like others) our holidays may indeed be *happy*, our true joy resides in the promises of the Word of God and just who this Christ child was, is, and will always be.

*"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." - Isaiah 7:14*

*"Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" - Luke 2:10-14*

Two thousand years ago, the Christ child was born. The announcement was first given to His mother Mary, and confirmed to His earthly father Joseph in an angelic dream:

*"And she[Mary] will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND BEAR A SON,*



**AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which is translated, "God with us." - Mat 1:21-23**

This Immanuel - the one of whom John the Baptist would later cry out, "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" had a grand purpose in God's eternal plan. This Christ child whose purpose was declared to Joseph, "*He will save His people from their sins.*" is the true reason for reflection, celebration, wonder, awe and worship at Christmas.

But is the point really to celebrate His birthday? Is it simply akin to the gathering of friends around a cake and singing Happy Birthday? Or should it perhaps go deeper in meaning?

Is it about the date?

We celebrate His birth on December 25th, but yet, historical and biblical evidences would place His birth more likely in late September.

#### **History of December 25th**

It is very interesting to note that in the first two hundred years of Church history there is no mention given as to the celebration of, nor the date of Christ's birthday. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Sextus Julius Africanus gave the first mention of December 25th as being a celebration of Christ's birth. This idea seemed to gain popularity by 336 A.D. where we not only find mention of it, but also debates surrounding the issue of the date of Christ's birth.

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church reports,

*"Though speculation as to the time of year of Christ's birth dates from the early 3rd century, Clement of Alexandria suggesting the 20<sup>th</sup> of May, the celebration of the anniversary does not appear to have been general till the later 4th century. The earliest mention of the observance on Dec. 25th is in the Philocalian Calendar, representing Roman practice of the year 336. This date was probably chosen to oppose the feast of the Natalis Solis Invicti [nativity of the unconquerable sun] by the celebration of the birth of the 'Sun of Righteousness' and its observance in the West, seems to have spread from*

Rome"<sup>1</sup>

Note the words, "*probably chosen to oppose the feast of the Natalis Solis Invicti*". What was that exactly?

In ancient Rome December 25th was the date of a celebration by the Romans to their primary god, the Sun, and of Mithras, a popular Persian sun god who supposedly was born on the same day. Pope Liberius in 354 made December 25th the celebration of Christ's birth, and it became the rule in the West in 435 when the first 'Christ Mass' was officiated by Pope Sixtus III. The Roman Catholic writer Mario Righetti candidly admits that,

*"to facilitate the acceptance of the faith by the pagan masses, the Church of Rome found it convenient to institute the 25th of December as the feast of the birth of Christ to divert them from the pagan feast, celebrated on the same day in honor of the 'Invincible Sun' Mithras, the conqueror of darkness"*<sup>2</sup>

Protestant historian Henry Chadwick sums up the controversy:

*"Moreover, early in the fourth century there begins in the West (where first and by whom is not known) the celebration of December 25th, the birthday of the Sun-god at the winter solstice, as the date for the nativity of Christ. How easy it was for Christianity and solar religion to become entangled at the popular level is strikingly illustrated by a mid-fifth century sermon of Pope Leo the Great, rebuking his over-cautious flock for paying reverence to the Sun on the steps of St. Peter's before turning their back on it to worship inside the westward-facing basilica"*<sup>3</sup>

Providing an alternative to the popular Roman holiday - that celebrated the winter solstice as a resurgence of the sun, the casting away of winter and the heralding of the rebirth of spring and summer - certainly seemed to be an easy parallel for the Church to make. It can truly be seen that after the popularization of December 25<sup>th</sup>, many Christian writers made the connection between the birth of the sun, and the birth of the Son.

---

***"...after the popularization of December 25th, many Christian writers made the connection between the birth of the sun, and the birth of the Son."***

Now many of you reading along may be wondering, "*Pagan Festival?! Should Christians even be a part of this?*" So I think we need to provide some discussion on this issue.

### Special Days of Observance

The Bible does not give us direction for the celebration of Christ's birthday. Christ himself made no mention of such an observance. He did however call us unto remembrance of His death and sacrifice through the ordinance of communion.

I think it is important that we keep our heads about this and not overreact in regards to the concept of a pagan celebration being hijacked by a Christian observance. I can guarantee you that throughout human history it can be found on every calendar day of the year that something evil or some ungodly worship practice has been done. The meaning of a day therefore must be left to the heart of the observer. I believe the Bible speaks clearly on this.

*"One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord...." - Romans 14:5-6*

*"Let no man therefore judge you...in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." - Colossians 2:16-17*

What matters most is what you do with each day the Lord has given you. Whether you or I had anything to do with December 25th being chosen is inconsequential. The fact remains that Western Civilization has adopted the date of December 25th for the remembrance of Christ's birthday. It is therefore most important what we as Christians actually celebrate on that day.

### The First Advent

The Christian heart truly sings out in praise and wonder at the words of the angels on the night of Christ's birth - '*Glory to God in the highest*'. We know the rest of the story of this once small child. Through His life, death and resurrection we became believers and

inheritors unto the glory of our salvation. Through this sovereign act of God, fallen man can once again be justified to God through repentance and faith in the Christ who was born in Bethlehem; destined to die on a cross and be raised again. What more reason is there for celebrating?

And yet I wonder if we actually have true understanding of the wonder of it all. What this birth, life, death and resurrection really means to you and me, and the world? That we, wretched sinners, are now made justified before a Holy, just and awesome God; that the creator died for the creation, so that we could regain what was lost in the Garden of Eden, on that fateful day with the fall of man.

If truly this message is recalled unto remembrance within a Christian heart, it would seem more akin to the celebration of Resurrection Day (Easter) and not Christmas. But yet we must recall the reason Christ came into the world at His first advent and give glory to God for the sacrifice made. We give praise, thanks and worship to the God that satisfied 300 promises (prophecies) with Christ at His first coming.

But are we truly celebrating Christ through spreading the hope of Christmas, or are we just celebrating selfishly amongst ourselves?

### Our Blessed Hope

I often wonder if the modern church has not indeed lost site of the '*rest of the story*' as Paul Harvey would say. How often we forget the 2nd part of the Messianic promises that the prophets and apostles of old declared so many years ago.

It may surprise the reader to know that there are over seven times more prophecies referring to Christ's second coming than there were in regard to His first. As each of the first coming prophecies were fulfilled consistently in a literal fashion, we must therefore assume that those second coming prophecies will likewise be fulfilled – literally.

The Bible gives us great promises of things yet to come. We who are Christian know the whole story. We




---

***"The Christian heart truly sings out in praise and wonder at the words of the angels on the night of Christ's birth - 'Glory to God in the highest'"***



Artists depiction of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come"

know that Christ has conquered death and that we have the promise of resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15:51-57, 1 Thess. 4:16-18, Rev. 20:6). We know that we are inheritors of the Kingdom. (2 Peter 1:11), That Christ will one day rule for 1000 years from David's throne in Jerusalem (Isaiah 9:7, Rev. 20:6), and that Justice will ultimately be satisfied and the wicked will go to everlasting punishment along with Satan the old serpent, the accuser of the world. (Matt. 25:41, Rev. 20:10-15)

The Bible declares there will be doubters and scoffers in the last days; that there would be those that would try to take the hope of the Christ from the world.

*"Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." For this they willfully forget:" - 2 Peter 3:3-5a*

But yet we have the promises given to us through God's Word that Christ indeed is coming back.

Isaac Watts, a musician and writer of one of the most favorite Christmas hymns, "Joy to the Word", obviously had these promises in mind when he penned the song. What is very interesting is to actually read and pay attention to the lyrics that we sing. You will be surprised to see clearly that Isaac Watts was not referring to Christ's first advent when he wrote the hymn. He was in fact referring to the Second Advent of Christ in the words of 'Joy to the World'. It would seem that throughout the years we have all been practicing for the eventful day of Christ's return!

When Christ ascended to heaven after His first visit to earth the angels said unto those watching, *"Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

My prayer is that in this season of celebration of an advent, we Christians would stand proud and shout from the

rooftops about the true hope of Christmas.

Christ did in fact come to earth once as a baby in a manger. He lived a humble life of servitude and sacrifice. He died on a cross, like a meek and lowly lamb led to the slaughter He left this world as a bruised and broken sacrifice.

However, when he returns the picture will be quite different.

*"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God...And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." – Rev. 19:11-16*

My friends Christ is coming! Our Lord! Our Savior is coming soon!

*"Joy to the World , the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart  
prepare Him room,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven, and Heaven, and  
nature sing.*

*Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills  
and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy."*

This holiday season may we all feel the urgency to spread the good news of the gospel to a world full of those that are perishing for lack of knowledge of the good news.

If we truly do love our fellow man and if we truly do love Christ, Christmas this year will be far more than a casual 'Merry Christmas' followed by a 'Happy New Year'. Like the angels of old that

---

**"If we truly do love our fellow man and if we truly do love Christ,..."**

announced Christ's first coming, we too are to spread the 'Goodwill to all Men' - the gospel of Jesus Christ which has the only power to save man from the sureness of God's justice. We must declare the saving grace of God.

May we be all be emboldened with renewed vigor, and may we all, in these dark days on earth, place all our hope and trust in the One who saved us!

*"Looking for the blessed hope and*

*glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" - Tit 2:13*

Maranatha & Merry Christmas,

- J.R. Hall

---

**"...we too are to spread the 'Goodwill to all Men'"**

**References:**

1. Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1983 edition, Oxford University Press, New York, 1983, p. 280, "Christmas"
2. Manual of Liturgical History, 1955, Vol. 2, p. 67
3. The Early Church, Penguin Books, London, 1967, p. 126.

## Signs of the Times – Part III

### As in the days of Noah...

In Proverbs God talks of a generation with ungodly characteristics:

*"There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." - Proverbs 30:11-12*

In 2 Timothy the apostle Paul provides a prophetic profile or "checklist" of the identifying characteristics of 'the generation' who will see the unfolding of the last days prophecies of the bible.

*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. -- 2 Timothy 3:1-5*

What a list! I encourage you to read it again; this time with the news headlines in front of you.

Let's take a moment to summarize through this verse. Please follow along and see for yourself how many of these characteristics seem to fit today's headlines and societal norms. (Note that the following list is not in order of the verse but rather organized by theme)

**Lovers of their own selves -**

**φύλαυτος** To be fond of Self: Selfish, studious of their own interest, and no regard to the welfare of all mankind.

**Covetous - φιλάργυρος** Literally *fond of Silver*. Lovers of money, undoubtedly because of the influence which riches can procure for *self*.

**Boasters - ἀλαζών** A braggart. Vain glorious: self-assuming; valuing self beyond all others.

**Proud - υπερήφανος** Airy, light, trifling persons; those who love to show themselves above others; from **υπέρο** - above, and **φαίνω** - to show.

**Blasphemers - βλάσφημος** Those who speak impiously of God and sacred things, and injuriously of men.

**Disobedient to parents - ἀπειθήσ γονεύς** Headstrong children, with no regard to honouring parents, and whom their parents cannot persuade.

**Unthankful - ἀχάριστος** Persons without grace, or gracefulness; thankless, ungrateful with no regard to One from whom all blessings flow.

**Unholy - ἀνόσιος** Without piety; wicked; having no heart reverence for God.



Noah preaching



Without Natural Affection

**Without natural affection** - ἄστοργος

Without that affection which parents bear to their young, and which the young bear to their parents. An affection which is even common to every class of animals; consequently, men without it are worse than brutes. They are hard hearted and unable to affectionately cherish their kindred.

**Truce-breakers** - ἄσπονδος

Literally without libation, because in making treaties libations both of blood and wine were poured out. The word means those who are bound by no promise, held by no engagement, obliged by no oath; persons who readily promise any thing, because they never intend to perform.

**False accusers** - διάβολος

Devils; but properly enough rendered false accusers, for this is a principal work of the devil. Slanderers - striving ever to ruin the characters of others.

**Incontinent** - ἀκράτης powerless, that is, without self control.

**Fierce** - ἀνήμερος The opposite of mild or gentle. Wild, savage, impetuous, whatever is contrary to pliability and gentleness.

**Despisers of those that are good** -

ἀφιλάγαθος Not lovers of good men. Here is a remarkable advantage of the Greek over the English tongue; one word of the former expressing five or six of the latter. Essentially this one Greek word means *hostile to virtue*. It is interesting to surmise that those who do not love the good must be radically bad themselves.

**Traitors** - προδότης Those who deliver up to an enemy the person who has put his life in their hands. Could this be the equivalent of parents not guarding their youth from the ways and wiles of the devil, and not bringing them up in godly reverence, understanding, and salvation? Essentially is not bad parenting a betrayal in the highest form?

**Heady** - προπετής To fall forwards,

that is, headlong. Figuratively it means headstrong, rash, and/or inconsiderate.

**High-minded** – τυφώω literally to envelop with *smoke*. Figuratively, to *inflate* with self conceit or pride.

**Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God** - φιλήδονος μάλλον ἢ

φιλόθεος Literally lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; i.e. pleasure, sensual gratification, is their god; and this they love and serve; God they do not.

I'm sure as you went through this list images and examples of each of these came to mind. Truly it can be seen that these characteristics certainly describe the pulse of the day we live in. With every passing day, the news reports exclaim with great accuracy the very nature of this 2 Timothy passage.

Let us return again to the first verse in this set of passages.

*“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come”. – 2 Timothy 3:1*

The word *perilous* translated from the Greek means “difficult, dangerous, furious, fierce or perilous”. The only other time this word *χαλεπός* ‘chalepos’ is used in the Bible is found in Matthew 8:28 where it is used to describe a man who had demons and was out of control; Wild like an untamed animal – *savage* and furious.

Author Stephen Covey, in his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families*, provides additional insight into the world today.

*“Over the past thirty years, the situation for families has changed powerfully and dramatically. Illegitimate birth rates have increased more than 400 percent. The percentage of families headed by a single parent has more than tripled. The divorce rate has more than doubled. Teenage suicide has increased almost 300 percent. Scholastic Aptitude Test scores among all students have dropped seventy-three points. The number one*

The GOD Delusion

Richard Dawkins

Richard Dawkins – despising those that are good.

*health problem for American women today is domestic violence. One fourth of all adolescents contract a sexually transmitted disease before they graduate from high school."*

Covey goes on to mention another startling fact. Do you know what the most reported problems in the 1940 school classrooms were?

Covey mentions them:

- Talking out of turn;
- Chewing gum;
- Making noise;
- Running in the halls;
- Cutting in line;
- Dress code infractions; and
- Littering

For a comparison let's have a look at the problems within the schools of the 1990's:

- Drug abuse;
- Alcohol abuse;
- Pregnancy;
- Suicide;
- Rape;
- Theft;
- Assault;

This list was from the 1990's - 20 years ago! I wonder how much more degraded it would be now?

Friends, these are savage times. Timothy tells us that perilous (chalepos) times shall come, but what we need to realize is that these days HAVE come. They are not coming. They are already here.

### **A Generation of Liars?**

Take a look at what is said in 2 Timothy 3:13:

*"Evil men and impostors [seducers] will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." -- 2 Tim 3:13*

Author Craig Crawford says the following.

*"The Scriptures tell us God cannot lie and He hates all liars. God says truth is non-negotiable and is fundamental to His law. In the past, liars and perjurers were dealt with harshly and severely. Today we see lying casually*

*accepted and even presented as funny or harmless. In God's eyes, elected leaders of a democracy are mirrors which reflect the people who elected them and willingly keep them in office. As noted, telling the truth is fundamental to God's law. In the Bible we find when a nation and its leader(s) defiantly mock, ignore, and turn their backs on God's law, God will turn His back on that nation and remove His protection and blessings from that people. God help us. The future of that people and nation is usually very, very grim. The other distressing thing found in this prophecy is God warning us the deception and lying will continue to grow even worse and worse. The leaders of "this generation" will not only disobey and ignore God's laws but will even brand God's laws as "intolerant" and will somehow twist obedience to God's laws into "hate."*

Hmmm... sounds familiar doesn't it?

2 Peter also gives some additional insight into the 'heartbeat' of the last days:

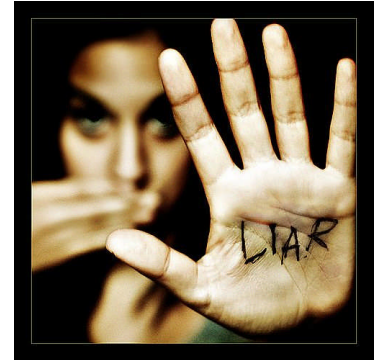
*"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." - 2 Peter 3:3-4*

The world seems to be full of scoffers. They look at us Christians and say, "Ha! You're dreaming. Where is this Christ? It's all a dream. It's not real. You've been duped."

"This generation" will ridicule those who take the warnings of the Bible seriously and wait in faith. What will people 'scoff' at? What events constitute the 'promise of His coming'?

The world will scoff at those of us who believe in the truth. While they themselves blindly believe that life here on earth will simply 'evolve' and that we will move on as we always have. This mentality is echoed in the words of Isaiah.

*"Come," one says, "I will bring wine, and we will fill ourselves with intoxicating drink; tomorrow will be as*




---

***"While they themselves blindly believe that life here on earth will simply 'evolve'..."***

*today, and much more abundant.” --  
Isa 56:12*

And yet the scriptures, through prophecy, say that life will not continue endlessly as it is now. For God has always had a plan for this world, and it seems as though the last phase of the plan is unfolding before our eyes.

Until next time,  
Go Serve Your King.

- J.R. Hall

### Overheard

***“About the time of the end,  
a body of men will be  
raised up who will turn  
their attention to the  
prophecies, and insist  
upon their literal  
interpretation, in the midst  
of much clamor and  
opposition.”***

*- Sir Isaac Newton  
(1643-1727)*

## Santa or Jesus



Well it's Christmas time again; that wonderful time of year where family and friends gather together to give each other gifts and celebrate the birth of Santa.

What's that?

It's not Santa?

It's the birth of Jesus? Oh... yes, yes of course. How easy it is to get those two confused when they have so much in common.

I mean, Santa delivers presents on Christmas, and Jesus, well he made His presence known.

Both Santa and Jesus are historical figures, and we usually think of them as both having beards, and being surrounded by happy little children, scurrying about.

Both have quite an uncommon last name that start with 'C' and what's with all the nicknames? They both have a ton of nicknames like, Father Christmas' Prince of Peace, 'Saint Nicholas', 'Emmanuel', 'Kris Cringle', 'Wonderful Counselor' and so on.

Speaking of names - does anybody else find it odd that they both somehow know everyone's name? And not only that but they both seem to have the omniscient ability of *'watching'* us. I hear they both like to keep detailed records on all of us.

And what of the apparent ability to be everywhere at once?

We know that Jesus lives in the hearts of believers everywhere and that as God He is said to be omnipresent. At the same time we have Santa, who not only delivers presents to every child in the world all in one night, but he also appears in several different malls all over the world - all at the same time - to greet children and hand out candy canes. And don't even get me started on all the parades that he has to attend.

A common trait that we all love, is that they both seem like pretty generous fellows. I mean each one of us seems to keep accurate lists of our 'I wants' and 'Do you think you could's', and then we flood both of them with these wish lists and desperately hope that they come through for us.

The more I think of it, however, I guess there are a few important differences between the two of them.

For example:

I don't think Jesus was known for wearing velvet, but Santa seems to be obsessed with it. And no one has ever accused Jesus of breaking in through the chimney and eating all their cookies.

We also know that Jesus was a carpenter, and although Santa has carpenters working for him in his woodshop, he doesn't seem to be the *hands-on* kind-of-guy.

Then there's the fact that Jesus had 12 disciples that followed him everywhere, but Santa, on the other hand, has 8



reindeer that lead him. (Perhaps 9 if you believe in legends and stories of the red nosed variety)

In the end, however, I keep going back to Santa's *naughty* or *nice* distinction. If we are to be totally honest with ourselves, we will probably find ourselves hoping that Santa isn't too strict, or at least we hope that he's grading on a curve.

Jesus, on the other hand, came because none of us are 'nice enough'. Of course we continually keep trying to convince ourselves and those around us otherwise.

Ultimately when it boils down to it, Santa is all about me and all the stuff I so desperately want.

But Jesus, on the other hand, is about something more; it's all about the Grace I so desperately need.

Come to think of it, maybe they don't have that much in common after all.

*"Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." - Luke 2:8-11*

God bless you and yours this Holiday Season.

- J.R. Hall

Note:

The basic idea and some of the material for this article was taken from the dialog of a wonderful video produced by Igniter Media and available here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSTpjQ477HA>

---

**"Jesus, on the other hand, is about something more; it's all about the Grace I so desperately need..."**



## News Bites

### ***Atheists Launch New Campaign Using Christmas Against God***

November 3, 2009  
By Jeff Westover



A new bus ad campaign in Virginia by the Freedom From Religion Foundation

Seattle, Washington will be ground zero for a new attack by Atheists using Christmas to attack belief in God. The Freedom from Religion Foundation launched a press release today touting plans to splatter an image of Santa Claus saying "Yes, Virginia, there is no God" on buses, billboards and public venues.

Starting this week, the Foundation is sponsoring 100 ads on Seattle buses that say "Yes, Virginia, there is no God." That's coming straight from the Santa's mouth on the signs, 100 of which will be king-sized exterior ads, with about 300 smaller ads inside buses.

The interior ads feature six

provocative quotations by five famous skeptics of history, plus a quote from perhaps the world's preeminent atheist, Richard Dawkins, author of the bestselling "The God Delusion." The ad features Dawkin's comment from the book: "The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction."

The ads also feature quotes from Emily Dickinson, Butterfly McQueen, Katharine Hepburn and Clarence Darrow, who famously said, "I don't believe in God, because I don't believe in Mother Goose." Actress Butterfly McQueen, who played Prissy in "Gone with the Wind,"

said: "As my ancestors are free from slavery, I am free from the slavery of religion." McQueen was a nearly lifelong atheist.

Continued online at:  
<http://defendchristmas.com/2009/11/03/atheists-launch-new-campaign/>

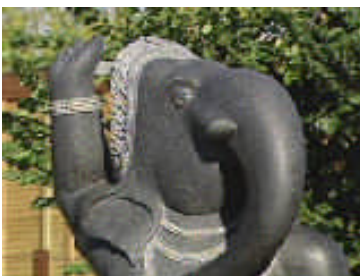
**Editor's Note:** *This is almost as silly as the old bus ad, "There is probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy life."*

*At least this time they've grown a backbone and removed the words 'probably'. It's hard to convince someone that what you say is true when you say 'probably' all the time.*

*What I find funniest about this new ad, is that we have the fictional character of Santa, telling us that God doesn't exist - just plain silly. Don't these guys have day jobs? I mean really.*

## ***Canadian Christians Fight Hindu Symbol in Public Display***

Sat Sep. 26 2009  
ctvcalgary.ca



The statue welcomes visitors to the elephant exhibit at the Calgary Zoo.

The Calgary Zoo is defending its decision to erect a statue in front of the elephant enclosure.

The statue is a depiction of the elephant headed Hindu god Ganesha.

Ganesha is widely revered as the remover of obstacles and is often the deity whom worshippers first acknowledge when they visit a temple.

Many people like it but some critics say that the statue does not belong at the zoo.

Concerned Christians Canada says religious statues should not be in publicly funded spaces.

The group wants the zoo to remove the statue or allow other religious groups to place icons from their faiths around the zoo.

"This Ganesh, this elephant figure, that is in fact a god of the Hindu faith, is welcome here because it's an elephant, because it therefore has relation to the zoo, the same could be said for the Christian faith and the manger of Jesus with all the animals coming around Jesus," said Jim Blake, National Chairman of Concerned Christians Canada.

The Zoo says that the statue adds cultural content to the Asian elephant exhibit.

"This is not intended to be a religious symbol," said Grahame Newton, of the Calgary Zoo, "This is a cultural symbol and it depicts the tie between our Asian elephant herd and the Asian culture."

Continued online at:  
[http://calgary.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20090925/CGY\\_ganesh\\_statue\\_090925/20090925/?hub=CalgaryHome](http://calgary.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20090925/CGY_ganesh_statue_090925/20090925/?hub=CalgaryHome)

**Editor's Note:** *"This is not intended to be a religious symbol"? Well Mr. Newton, intended to or not, it is what it is.*

*I can't wait to see what they put outside the Lion Cages.*

*Why is it ok for every other religion to be put on display except Christianity? Hmmm, could it be that the world hates God that much? Romans 8:9*

## News Bites

### Filmmaker admits intimidation by Islam

#### '2012' maker destroys Vatican, Jesus, but leaves shrine in Mecca alone

Posted: November 04, 2009  
© 2009 WorldNetDaily

The maker of the upcoming apocalyptic film "2012" has conceded he enjoyed orchestrating the visual disintegration of the world's religious symbols, such as the Vatican and the famous statue of Jesus overlooking Rio de Janeiro.

But he left an Islamic symbol alone because he feared the reaction from the Muslim world.

In an interview with the online SciFiWire website, Roland Emmerich said he had considered including the destruction of the Kaaba, the cube-shaped structure in Mecca worshiped by Muslims as being built by Abraham

and his son Ishmael.

"Well, I wanted to do that, I have to admit," Emmerich said. "But my co-writer Harald [Kloser] said I will not have a fatwa on my head because of a movie. And he was right. ... We have to all ... in the Western world ... think about this."

"You can actually ... let ... Christian symbols fall apart, but if you would do this with [an] Arab symbol, you would have ... a fatwa, and that sounds a little bit like what the state of this world is. So it's just something which I kind of didn't [think] was [an] important element, anyway, in the film, so I kind of left it out," he said.

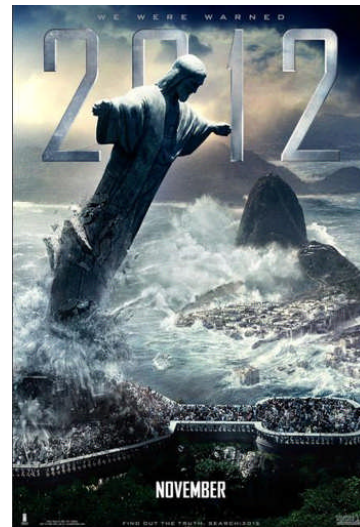
The movie is set to open in theaters in a little over a week.

Continued at:  
<http://www.wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=115011>

**Editor's Note:** So, I have a question. Why would anyone have to fear retribution from a 'Religion of Peace'?

You see, the world wants to believe that Islam is peaceful. They will go ahead and say it on public T.V and preach it in the streets, but when it comes right down to it they will err on the side of caution in fear of retribution. So is it peaceful or not? No one is afraid of Christians rioting in the streets.

Gen 16:12 He shall be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man, And every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."



A Movie Poster for the new apocalyptic thriller, "2012"

### Medvedev okays widened possible use of military force abroad

MOSCOW, November 9 (RIA Novosti) - The Russian president on Monday signed into law a bill expanding the use of the Russian Armed Forces abroad in certain situations.

The bill was passed by both houses of the Russian parliament in October.

Dmitry Medvedev said on Thursday Russia would use its Armed Forces outside the country only in extreme circumstances to protect Russian nationals.

"Such decisions will be made only when absolutely necessary," Medvedev said. "Our citizens must be protected in any part of the world, and they must feel protected by the state."

He stressed that such decisions "must be set in law."

Medvedev submitted the

amendments to parliament in August, just after the first anniversary of Russia's five-day war with Georgia.

The amendments stipulate that Russian troops can be used abroad to repel an attack on Russian troops deployed outside the country, repel or prevent an armed attack on another state asking Russia for military assistance, defend Russian nationals abroad from an armed attack, fight sea piracy and ensure the safety of commercial shipping.

Russia's current 2006 legislation only allows the president to send troops to fight terrorism on foreign soil. Experts have said the law lacks clearly defined terms of "wartime" and a "combat situation," which complicates the deployment of troops outside the country.

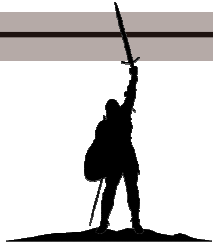
Under the new document,

the Russian president can decide to deploy armed forces abroad subject to approval by the upper house.

Continued online at:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2009/08/21/us/AP-US-Lutherans-Gays.html>

**Editor's Note:** Looks like the first steps toward the fateful assistance that Russia will provide to the Arab neighbors of Israel for the fulfillment of the Ezekiel 38&39 war of "Gog & Magog".





## Berean Watchmen Ministries

Berean Watchmen Ministries  
P.O. Box 38007  
Preston Crossing  
Saskatoon, SK, Canada  
S7N 1H2

Phone:  
(306) 649-4202

E-MAIL:  
office@bereanwatchmen.com

*"...Now these [Bereans] were more noble... in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."  
- Acts 17:10-11*

Berean Watchmen Ministries is a non-profit charitable corporation registered under the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.bereanwatchmen.com](http://www.bereanwatchmen.com)

## Letter's from our Readers

**Q:** While reading the Christmas account from Matthew I noted that the Bible does not specifically say that there were three wise men. It only mentions that they in fact were wise men, and neglects to give a number. Why do people assume three?

- S.H.

**A:** The Bible does not in fact give a number – you are correct! I think the assumption comes from the fact that three gifts were given. The Bible tells us in Matthew 2:11 that the gifts were gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Tradition also tells us that there names were Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar, however it is important to know that Scripture itself gives no mention of names, or the number. We really have no way of verifying if that tradition is accurate.

Another interesting tidbit is that many people believe that the wise men found the Christ child

in the manger in Bethlehem. Again, going to Scripture – specifically Matthew 2:11 – we see that the wise men found the Christ child at a *house*. From the rest of the text the actual time could have been days, weeks, or even a couple years from the manger event.

We do know for sure that the wise men came from the East. We surmise that they could have come from Persia. This would make sense in light of the fact that the prophet Daniel was actively involved in the King's courts of Persia in years previous.

Daniel 9:24-27 talks of the Messiah who is to come, and Numbers 24:17 mentions a 'star coming out of Jacob'. Perhaps Daniel's influence and the influence of the Jewish captives of old, were long-lasting in Persia. And these wise men who knew of those writings (prophecies) knew what the signs were when they saw them in the night sky. The

wise men called the star 'His Star', when they asked Herod, "*Where is He who has been born the King of the Jews?*" We can see that they were indeed quite knowledgeable in the event that was taking place at that time.

So where does that leave us? Well... just with the understanding that we're not exactly sure how many wise men there were. However, what we do know is that these men who came from the East, read and believed God's Word, sought after Christ, recognized the worth of Christ, and humbled themselves to worship Him.

These truly were wise men.

And you know what?

Wise men still seek Him.

- J.R. Hall

## Overheard

***"I want to know how God created this world. I am not interested in this or that phenomenon, in the spectrum of this or that element. I want to know his thoughts. The rest are details."***

***- Albert Einstein***



**Berean Watchmen Ministries** is proud to be an Allied Ministry with the Ambassador's Alliance program of Living Waters Ministry and Way of the Master. <http://www.ambassadorsalliance.com/>

The Ambassador's Alliance is a global alliance of churches, para-church ministries, and individual Christians who share the common vision of fulfilling the Great Commission and inspiring in every Christian a God-glorifying passion to do the same. All members of the alliance - whether church, para-church ministry, or individual Christian - are committed to using the Law of God to help the unbeliever recognize their true spiritual condition and their need for the Savior, and to present the entirety of the gospel in a biblical way.