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The Watchmen

THE VOICE FROM THE WALL

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The Reason for the Season – 2010

Last year I wrote an article for Christmas, and this year when I sat down to write an article suitable for the Christmas edition of 'The Watchmen' I could only think of repeating some of what I had said last year and revising a little here and there. In light of the world around us, and in light of what Christmas really means, I can still echo the words within this article, and stress nothing less than the true 'Reason for the Season'. I cannot help but sense how we are losing ground day by day and very soon, there will be no one left who remembers... or cares to remember. I hope you don't mind the republishing of the article and we wish you all a Merry Christmas.

'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 with family and friends. But even in our cheer is the overshadowing sense 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*. *O' Holy Night* is nothing more than a memory, and no one stops to reflect *What Child is This?*

Even for those who remember that Christmas has something to do with the birth of the Christ child long ago in Bethlehem, the memory remains somewhat in the background of all else that is going on. Like 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 is 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. Amid 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. More importantly, even though 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, *"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 20th 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"¹

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

"... 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"

same day in honor of the "Invincible Sun" Mithras, the conqueror of darkness"²

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"*³

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 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 could 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 to the world? That we, wretched sinners, are now made justified before a holy, just and



"That we, wretched sinners, are now made justified before a holy, just and awesome God"



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 over 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 (and would be right in doing so) that those second coming prophecies will likewise be fulfilled – literally and accurately.

The Bible gives us great promises of things yet to come. The Christian heart knows the whole story. We 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 with the

unrepentant sinner going 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*'. The lyrics, as we will see in a moment, are full of suggestions of Christ ruling and reigning on an earthly throne. 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, and 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 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 in response to sin. We must declare the saving grace of God. We must tell people the gospel.

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

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.

"We must declare the saving grace of God. We must tell people the gospel."



Deserting Our Kids in a Godless Age

“It is not the internet, or the information age that is to be faulted or to be blamed...”

When I first sat down to write this article I was going to focus on the social networking that our youth are being inundated with. I was going to talk about Facebook, and the dangers, or the negative impact that such networking can have on our youth. However, as I considered my thoughts and tried to put my finger on what truly is the issue at the *bottom line*, I realized it wasn't the social networking that our kids are exposed to. It is not the Internet, or the information age that is to be faulted, or to be blamed for the negative, disrespectful and blatant ungodly nature of our youth today.

It's our fault.

Plain and simple, if someone is to be blamed for how the youth are in this day and age, it is us. It is the parents of those youth. It is we who profess to love God with all our heart mind and soul, and yet we fail to demonstrate and teach that very concept to our children. Teach it in a way that is true and heartfelt. Teach it in a way as if their very lives depended on it. Which I would hate to remind our readers, is completely true! Their lives do in fact depend on it.

Countless times throughout the Bible God warns us about our adversary and how we are to live lives in resistance to that adversary.

“Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not

quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will. - 2 Tim. 2:19,22-26

Young or old, the Devil sets snares in our lives. He knows how to get us bogged down in 'life' and he will do all he can do render us immobile and paralyzed from doing the will of the Father in heaven.

Are we warning our kids about the snares of the devil?

What about this verse?

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” – 1 Peter 5:8

The word 'vigilant' means to 'be wary' or to 'keep watch' for possible danger or difficulties. Are we teaching our kids to be wary? Are we training them to keep watch? Or are we simply allowing their senses to be dulled, in the un-sober, mind-numbing, toxic, potent and inebriated world of the Information Technology age.

The passage reads that the Devil is a “*roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.*” These are strong words. This means that Satan is sneaking around trying to devour our kids. How many of us would not sound the alarm, grab a baseball bat, or even call the police should we see a burglar sneaking around our house at night?

How many of us fathers wouldn't get protective to a point of physical confrontation if some strange man



..walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

began to grope at our daughters and sons?

And yet, we sit idly by watching our evening television, or too busy at the office to take note of our biggest responsibility God has ever given us; To be the protector, the teacher, and the mentor to our children.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.”

– Proverbs 22:6

“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

– Ephesians 6:4

When our kids are young we teach them that hot stoves burn their hands, that running in the street is dangerous, that playing with knives can cut. Yet when it comes to spiritual things, we do nothing to warn our children of the deadly and dangerous wiles of the Devil.

Ephesians 6 mentions us putting on the whole armor of God so that we can stand against the ‘wiles of the devil.’

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

– Ephesians 6:11

The word wiles is defined in the Merriam Webster Dictionary as:

Devious or cunning stratagems employed in manipulating or persuading someone to do what one wants

Do our children know about the armor of God and our defense? Ephesians 6 continues:

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the

whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints” - Eph. 6:12-18

Our defense against the devil is clearly defined here as truth, righteousness, our salvation and faith. It is also interesting to note that our sure footedness (feet) seems to hinge on the gospel message.

James tells us to:

“Therefore submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” – James 4:7

If we resist the Devil, and shield ourselves from his fiery darts, the devil will indeed flee from us. God’s Word promises us that he will grow weary of the tempting and flee; not walk away; not saunter off, but flee from us.

The dictionary defines ‘flee’ as “To run away often from danger; to hurry toward a place of security”.

Do you realize the promise in that? It means we shall prevail when in truth, righteousness, faith, salvation, and the word of God, we stand firm and resist the Devil - the roaring lion that seeks to devour.

The picture painted in Ephesians 6 of our battle preparation against the Devil is finalized with the ‘Sword of

“.. . these omitted populations are presently among Israel’s most observable enemies”

“... in a 100 years the only thing that will ever matter is whether or not they followed Jesus.”

the Spirit; which is the Word of God’

In the time of the writing of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, the sword was the most deadly weapon man could wield or possess. There were no guns, no explosives or things of that nature. The sword was everything to enforce, to ensure safety, and for survival.

Christ demonstrated the power of the Sword of the Spirit when the Devil tempted Him. Matthew 4 and Luke 4 document three times how the Devil tried to tempt Christ. Each time Jesus answered the Devil with the Word of God. Each time Jesus resisted the Devil and countered the attack with the *Sword of the Spirit*.

The final outcome was just as promised to us:

“Then the Devil left him.” – Matt. 4:11a

We are to wield the Sword of the Spirit and wield it well. To wield means to be able to utilize the weapon efficiently and effectively. If we do not immerse ourselves in the Word of God daily, how can we be sure to wield it as required?

Soldiers train for battle, and yet the modern Christian does not even pick up the Sword. It sits in the corner of

the room and collects dust. Sure once in a while we see someone else pull out their Sword, say a few encouraging words about it and then put it back in their sheaths, but never do we think it’s necessary to take ours out, to shine it up or to train for battle.

This holiday season (and thereafter) sit down with your kids and tell them the importance of their relationship with the Christ Child who once came to earth as a babe. Warn your children that the Devil wants to destroy them. Teach your kids and equip them with the whole armor of the Holy Spirit so they can extinguish the flaming darts of the enemy. Tell them that Christ is the most important thing to any man; that in a 100 years the only thing that will ever matter is whether or not they followed Jesus. Express to them that this is the most important thing in their lives; stress the importance of Christ, God’s Word, and prayer in their lives.

But most of all... show them.

Now go serve your King,

- J.R. Hall

Could this be ‘The Last Christian Generation’?

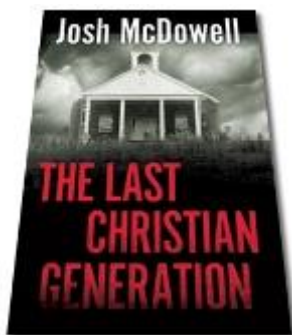
Instead of heading to the movies, and if you’d rather save the 20 bucks, or whatever it would cost today to see a movie, check out a slim volume by that roving observer of modern culture, apologetics icon Josh McDowell.

His horror tale, "The Last Christian Generation," should keep any reader up at night, and it should be read by anyone in Christian leadership who – can I say it – gives a "darn" about the culture. At least McDowell, and his publisher, Green Key Books, have the guts to put out something

as hard-hitting as this book.

McDowell, of course, has been involved in apologetics for decades and his previous books, "More Than a Carpenter" and "Evidence That Demands a Verdict," are classics. (By the way, for "The Last Christian Generation," I would be remiss if I didn’t acknowledge McDowell’s co-author, Dave Bellis, a longtime associate in McDowell’s ministry.)

For this latest effort, McDowell takes a look at how America’s young people see Christianity; in short, in



horrifyingly large numbers, they don't believe in it. Thus, we are forced to consider that we are the last Christian generation.

In fact, William Ayer's most famous friend has declared that we are no longer a Christian nation. Perhaps he's right.

In any event, McDowell opens "The Last Christian Generation" with a brief exchange between a college student, Greg, and his family. Greg is home for a visit and reveals that he no longer attends church. His dismayed parents discover that for Greg and his younger sister, church just isn't relevant anymore. McDowell peppers the book with stories like this here and there, to illustrate how this disinterest in church is affecting relationships in the real world.

He also relates his own encounters with young people (McDowell has spoken on more than 700 college and university campuses over the years!). During one such conversation, he asks a young woman if engaging in premarital sex is wrong.

She replies that it's wrong "for her," but she won't judge others.

In other words, truth today has become subjective, and McDowell hammers this point home: Young people in America today believe contradictory things – the Bible is true, but perhaps only some of it. I'm paraphrasing here a bit, and maybe taking some liberties, but that's where it is.

Decades of drip, drip, drip critical attacks on the Bible have yielded the results that the socialist change agents planned all along. By openly mocking religion (Christianity in particular) and openly challenging believing students, college professors have effectively brought about the spiritual equivalent of Joe Stalin's "purges." Just as Stalin, for

example, decapitated his military (just ahead of Hitler's invasion) because he feared disloyalty among leaders who knew what he was, college professors today have beheaded a collective, moral generation. Or two or three.

The effect is to produce an immoral, relativistic generation that nurses narcissism like a stiff drink.

Thankfully, McDowell has been around the spiritual block a few times and has real insight into the problem and how to attack it.

In Chapter 7, "Changing Our Educational Model," he advocates the importance of what he calls the Hebrew model of education, in which Jewish education about heritage not only imparts facts about historical events, but inculcates young people in long-held traditions and values. In contrast, consider that our education model today is based on Greek learning. This Hellenistic system, which simply requires a regurgitation of facts, produces a morally sterile pool of students, automatons who then go out and live for themselves.

McDowell writes about this approach:

"The Hellenistic model is adequate, of course, in some areas. For example, certain mathematical or scientific facts are not intended to transform a person's life. However, when it comes to the truth about God and his ways, the Hellenistic model, which many have adopted as their teaching and preaching method in the Church, is woefully inadequate. If we present Christianity as a worldview to be discussed, debated and proven on a rational basis rather than a transformational basis, we will in all probability continue to see the lives of young people go unchanged. If we hope to reveal God for who he is to this

"The effect is to produce an immoral, relativistic generation that nurses narcissism like a stiff drink."



Josh McDowell

generation and lead them to respond properly to him, we must bring about both orthodoxy and orthopraxy, right teaching and right actions in our children and young people."

In fact, it is all-important to McDowell that young people are taught to have a relationship with God, not simply to attempt to understand certain facts about him. And McDowell takes the large, politically incorrect step of claiming that a proper understanding of God requires one to understand the redemptive nature of Jesus Christ.

McDowell cites alarming data, such as a 1994 study by his ministry that reveals young people who have no biblical worldview are twice as likely to be pessimistic than those with a biblical worldview. Since 51 percent of young people today do not believe that Jesus Christ rose bodily from the grave, there's a lot of dark thinking out there.

In conclusion, though, McDowell rolls up his sleeves and advocates a strategy for rescuing America's younger generations by teaching intellectually defensible propositions

and at the same time pointing listeners to a loving, personal God who acts in history and in individual lives.

That is the one message that just might turn America around.

- Jim Fletcher

"... a proper understanding of God requires one to understand the redemptive nature of Jesus Christ."

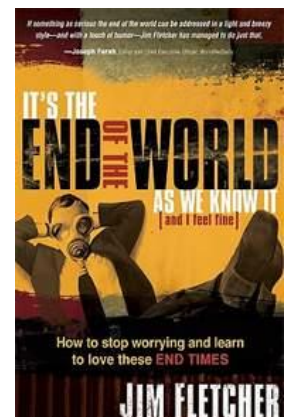


About the Guest Commentator:

Jim Fletcher is director of Prophecy Matters. The longtime editor for Master Books, the world's largest publisher of creationism books, Jim now travels and speaks on the subject of apologetics. Incorporating his impressions gleaned from numerous trips to Israel, and with a keen eye on the culture, his talks are up-to-date and relevant. Jim writes for a variety of publications, including the Jerusalem Post, WorldNetDaily, and OneNewsNow.

His new book, *"It's the End of the World As We Know It (And I Feel Fine)"* has just been released by Strang's Christian Life imprint.

You can learn more about Jim and his ministry by visiting his website at: <http://www.prophecymatters.com/>



News Bites

Canadian Prime Minister says, "We Stand with Israel".

Mon, Nov. 8 2010 6:10 PM ET

Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he is prepared to suffer any political backlash that comes his way for speaking out against anti-Israel rhetoric.

Harper told an audience Monday that while Israel is receptive to fair criticism, Canada is obligated to stand up for its ally when it comes under attack from others.

"Not just because it is the right thing to do, but because history shows us, and the ideology of the anti-Israel mob tell us all too well, that those who threaten the existence of the Jewish people are in the longer term

a threat to all of us."

The prime minister acknowledged that his position is not popular with all governments and organizations, including members of the United Nations and the Francophonie.

"And I know, by the way, because I have the bruises to show for it, that whether it is at the United Nations or any other international forum, the easiest thing to do is simply to just get along and go along with this anti-Israel rhetoric, to pretend it is just about being even-handed, and to excuse oneself with the label of honest broker.

"There are, after all, a lot

more votes -- a lot more -- in being anti-Israeli than in taking a stand. But as long as I am prime minister, whether it is at the United Nations, the Francophonie or anywhere else, Canada will take that stand, whatever the cost."

Continued at:
<http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/Politics/20101108/harper-israel-101108/>

Editor's Note:

All I have to say is, 'Wow!' and thank you God for Stephen Harper. Pray for the Canadian PM as he takes this stand in such an anti-Semitic world.

"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee:" – Genesis 12:3



Canadian PM Stephen Harper

Survey: 2 in 3 Say Religion Losing Influence on American Life

Mon, Aug. 23 2010 10:47 PM EDT

Two-thirds of Americans (67 percent) currently say that religion is losing its influence on American life, up from 59 percent who said the same in July 2006, according to the latest national survey by the Pew Research Center.

And, as in the past, most of those who say that religion has less influence on American life see this development as a bad thing – 53 percent of the total public says it is a bad thing while just 10 percent see it as a good thing.

Meanwhile, when it comes to the involvement of churches and other houses of worship in political matters, Americans are more divided, with a narrow majority (52 percent) saying houses of worship should keep out of political matters.

Forty-three percent, meanwhile, say houses of

worship should express their views on day-to-day social and political questions. But when it comes to endorsing specific candidates for public office, 70 percent of American surveyed said churches should not come out in favor of candidates during political elections while just a quarter (24 percent) supports such endorsements.

"More than half of every major religious group opposes such endorsements," authors of the latest Pew study noted.

Pew's latest study, based on a national sample of 3,003 adults living in the continental United States, was conducted in English and Spanish from July 21 to Aug. 5.

The survey covered a number of questions pertaining to religion and politics – the main topics

being President Obama and Religion, Religion and the 2010 Elections, and Religion and Politics in general.

Continued online at:
<http://www.christianpost.com/article/20100823/survey-2-in-3-say-religion-losing-influence-on-american-life/>

Editor's Note: *As our other articles in this issue have stated, and after reading the book by Josh McDowell on "The Last Christian Generation" I can certainly see the words of 2 Timothy 3:1-7 coming to full fruition.*

Christians! Out time is short. Serve the one we profess to love!





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*"...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

Letter's from our Readers

Q: "I have just read the "Stop & Think - Israel's Blockade," portion of THE WATCH-MEN (July-Aug).

I appreciate your summary review, your references to Scripture, and your assessment of the media... If ours is a ministry of The New Covenant, should we not **also** be moving, **with a heart of love**, right into the Islamic community of a billion descendants of Ishmael?" - George B.

A: Of course we should! My hope for those of the descendants of Ishmael is the same for those descendent of Isaac; We hope and pray that all will come to find salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. The very purpose statement of Berean Watchmen Ministries declares that we must.

The first line reads,

"We exist to glorify God and to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:3,4; John 3:16) and the message of his return

(Titus 2:13 ; John 14:2-3)."

My article on the blockade was a look at the hypocrisy in the world stage as Israel merely tries to fight for their right to exist. God has a special plan for Israel, but that does not include a special and unique plan for salvation. Jew, Gentile, Arab, or whatever, there is only one name under heaven and earth by which man can be saved. Jesus is the only way.

Whoever repents of their sin, and trusts in the Lord Jesus to save them - will in fact be saved.

I must admit I'm having difficulty relating this discussion to the article I wrote.

I love the Arab people, no more and no less than I love everyone. I wish that all will come to the knowledge of the saving grace of Christ.

I would hope this is also the wish of every Christian. A good question to ask each of us is "Do we daily preach

the Gospel, and share Christ with those around us?" One does not have to travel to the Middle East to witness to the Ishmael's descendants.

I just hope and pray, we're all doing our part.

Christ spoke plainly,

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." - Mark 16:15-16

Do we preach the Gospel to every creature in our local world?

- J.R. Hall

Upcoming Events...

Nineteenth Annual Pre-Trib Study Group, Dallas, TX.
(Dec 6-8, 2010)

Berean Watchmen are pleased to attend this annual meeting of the PreTrib Research Institute. This think-tank meeting is one of our favorites to attend for the fellowship, and

the edification that it provides.

Check out :
<http://www.pre-trib.org/conference> for more information

Overheard

*"Rejoice, that the immortal God is born, so that mortal man may live in eternity."
- John Huss*