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|  | |  | |  | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/PM_NPN_TopShadowRight.png | | | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/PM_NPN_TopBarRight.png | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/PM_NPN_ShadowLB1.png | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/PM_NPN_ShadowLB2.png | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/PM_NPN_ShadowLB3.png | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/PM_NPN_ShadowLB4.png | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/PM_NPN_ShadowLB5.png | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/PM_NPN_ShadowLB6.png | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/PM_NPN_ShadowLB7.png | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/PM_NPN_ShadowLB8.png | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/PM_NPN_ShadowLB9.png | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/PM_NPN_ShadowLB10.png | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  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Headlines** |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | **12/24/14** HEADLINES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH****TRACKING BIBLE PROPHECY****[http://www.trackingbibleprophecy.org/birthpangs.php](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsURp8lqB87GNsRkGA07o03QXjRO0TAGM3J1LlGu6qrQt47Zj_s_nhilL7EcMbZ-AqlF9bdrdfrSlP3NdwLuX3Ue650fDyQ_44OSANoy3w3gKr0ratx6Sui8rUvu4gFntKlaz1m9PDSPM5UVO_GxY0TOjIGXeG5mkGkw==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==) [Hamas rejects PA statehood bid at the UN](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvs5fPAz03oWMsYZv3KuW8sFz8rJxxMQd86QLB5gbptC5yOugo-lTQ5oh7KnNO1a8X9bzEw83EYRh5psQbsqqMQ06T_7eWLOSNs8HyQX2kRYc4u9UBCyVXh1rbULUuH_-mNkVe8IDTGO1typw2siwbwk_plVFRVIyXNb80pJvp-rJdmK6YA1QIIhck7QjdNkYhVfOWzBQ9Mo8=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Hamas: PA's draft resolution to Security Council does not represent the Palestinians](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAv7I7okanezWTOha6tVnFJGNvvizusTBQN4fWxZudLUrVX0_6DlCmNdZikeR_BFuutyZjnG7nlcAb9pymBD-_RlD9XsHt0VjWl95YAq3Ga0LJbEUwUMqF0KMug77sy4SnwUrP5lQFUYB9EwfnB5hB83xMHXRNYp__xsQjScHjN9YF4X7aIWwLxoFB515GztSF4cAqnJoHBxWb57cVpHVtMyKAtoFOjGt0TiiZ4MMtbwkK3ZVcQEK5b_w==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Abbas vows to win full recognition of Palestine state at UN bid](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvi73cqUBB29XCGWsa1zR0pfWVE1kkqfny2HfYzEav07YqR4Y7lm8FPHeMqd8COpgmWeU8ZRLuZyleAaGPi6_8rgTuo0cKgl8jzgj00wHgu0064X5UG96I2WR-exLA12BL0JL9IFNthk9IwwiblEKqvKKP-hC1AfAw-CF8Hiy-pyT7ESgN8l6OYA==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Abbas: If resolution to end 'occupation' not passed, we will stop dealing with Israeli government](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvOb5x692JqvLu7ggiaVFI1eRxYjHmvGk_mpYcRx0ZdFDK9r9NAvwNTVNcR5oK4f-TLDjXfEyuJeHb2-CsjKzodKeKStddaNYKjieKq5dArMfvTJZnF0E7D0k91G-lf-yfZOEwZwLxeRenM3CCA2O2U5oc5tAkaIq3zwA66rzN4uUccUovDenw1WKNsHaBwiNJdM9AWMEl0flIbq1a5a2KmSUAmefN8KsBR-9uVEe1YxGUQePHg6gWU-CHuXG-NcRjWXUFWcqkzYI=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Netanyahu: Herzog and Livni will divide Jerusalem](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvZIEVVxiosAj8yaOwHY8pbAVSIXEOE4GOB504hyhfzYcWo9GW6D7i11yhpxnKEZ_zfqVNmGJnHTLrpiMHCTC-ME-Of3yM4JiyvONdvVq-L3fIDcEvuagCwysqS5YsUIDrDgRxDZ7rsCLKipFn7Fz2SEOMTCBJFg2q&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Netanyahu: If Livni elected Jews will need armored personnel to reach Western Wall](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvluJKHUEexakxZdBBcmwQbZqRQf-ESGyRzil0WCoLa0AQWWI51mvzjAOsFEM6Z9ZrZLa39VD7f5gxCckZjv8-n_lMi7SNwwOzJbdlcNHAxHU_gGY_75jky_uqaEH1mgFGhbeqeuH5g6HgwYFhP6Ejc9bGNMQjiDA30YElVPtLXVQUMZc-CY5Vdr2TrEp5v6kEMpLwZkzkbsVkzxjFq_cK2fBZDYheLOBwMnEeHTnxnTAYJ-iKEx0aLsenWI5AWzEV&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Ya'alon: Hamas rebuilding defensive tunnels; Israel looking for new digging of offensive tunnels](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvhbuqjIdAEoYDXpgYXQ08dbyaOt2kGCfF5XyRssFWMJTN3RFXRNvrUavDMBEhT9S6X7DSl6IWmUQy73QN62UyRqXMYb-b2T-8nXCyLSWjrG9mtcTfhlXms5AVY7t9bQybpY3ijtdXW-DHyrnzL9q1k55YVVsISAQDdRt99zTV5PGkaAv9Eg1CDQ5d39f4R8r8fwfA16pJ8uIWmZfsDMJffHAC_YfpQZlNtYKKi2OK4_FSEeQYDpxwt5xMx55ray82bEU6_xPJ8_4=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Israel official: Settlement funding up before vote](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvchofQmlbZwTkcNDBwVOJ1On7AEykFal30Qhg13wwhpEG1KpO7wW2SV_n8pxeX9o98xKhB5jXFtLcJVlCiDulFfLaSvfFBNcou2Q2AR6IInnl3izuxWK1Leq5wVLiWC56UztbzKdFgRhfq97mEyQsGSYDEdqdpR2gguiB8mDVs8RM1QbUXIwz2rTpu0QvZVEHfFZdW2PYdi8vz7CvdL7Rh3MwgLG2ekpg&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Israel to bust gas field monopoly](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvMroO87meylREWwjuMSxzvSt_sqItxwsqCl0BScLIhEELX6elSaL8v_5sP8SnVaS21FgVVqWJ1wGCkOjKE7-SRt7MCf_rTjQ12o9XtSg7-EjNN2mXiOpVrAx_PCdcusQfvZD-w7k-F8uA2QQUssB-gOtiQsQjJFYl&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [ISIS Closing in on Israel from the North and the South](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvE_J1YQj8nc2O-yvW9qWLszyzDVBfueGGK5-goMy6cwHGDnU4owpSu1-db-9uQzgN_KUn6lCmrzKiGmYkd70Eaj76P8gOoF7m4zWtxIFmGtn-cSO7XgWwBftnUm75qh-61bNk3R0wPJbsBAF2oNk6Yg_nUIMkygg7wQ3VYZZTUd46J6DEoOTlMg==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Ten more strikes hit Islamic State in Syria](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvgmY300gvCuDjAHxcUi3QWc3y7ymvyGqR9k-m-t7XTvyAS0ILdz4POzwacYtBMCQljiJJpMLwrkz18eFUezulsbK1YvcdCpasAjQeCCRWbgGUIVOz3hiQl6SP1UMBdYB5u7THBXZGybkwp74ev4P1ahxSH6urR1OsSEuH1o088BPFPtm8tkr4JPvy0Yuv8PT4&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Monitor: Over 1,000 Islamist militants killed in US strikes in Syria](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvHp-j70_6N40W95L7eo5g4L1ewyXH0meZpM6V9kOeDB6gT11EgeEpFrG7Byi8PgvuNDc100ul_KlU1_VQ1Xl90Z2NCDmV5sxqYEFXgn_tFY_blHXTBoXVnCJwz_sZlMekgoQWaPYaD7EBDtS2PLUuBCZGFbD0JUgrNKrqxX4C3Kk3fX0sXRNYVrRMPkA1NLRMzPw8o6GlQjiiq2_jWHlqZo75M8KpkFhA&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Satellite images show 290 heritage sites in Syria damaged by war: UN](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvj3wfH26qzJUGT-1fn66UDNhT7CC9DfIODeP56kV7eOKvSBWwH0kloCShGqVfAdHG4woL1cCFg9xFGws6661TY0c1E992GidpruoX3dH3FvNXiky1Qqi_DWfr8m9yov9WXKfWmNXTzXKyJ8yK8JfGwDxphXutihmifXk2HtJTUrzFrM8wn66Tu6xQCVSxW6LDVfHuQ5z3kUT0653R5UiMtGxbgtAj2iJZ&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Sixty journalists killed in 2014, Mideast deadliest area](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvjznuhETu69utQHasyzlvgISGQgPXaaAPOUKM5rmqk24jUkr0ZrjPTZbBZES7JyWlB6HzH6nd-h6dL2JAZgJu80XPs3h7BwTSoqOHMJwzuVw3JP6GJF5BlQYPit3NHi9hiNdzwCi5W38tRHHS2oTEzuidvJBOgIc8M80MA_htCNItcGUKDz2DXDoQS_wWaqig9--DwXR0ZsE6Hb1oTetKqw==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Australian PM says increased 'terrorist chatter' following Sydney siege](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvgys4IQfwfJ823FkMi67123ZL0F8LreMj98qPhbj0x9pEro9Mn9K9wtFk5xP9RNHGuV3dFYn-C7qNf5hUdJXic-NeoH2jO5uIZMqX7WRXJgLb-nN3QyAfHtK9qgAm7cqfDbo6UINu7MGzUaT_j1le2Ie8lTNPc8f3A4jVfmjkYZXcPpQPjuK8VNH2PeIC_Kqtv8kRAzk8YFWME_dfYayjax-GTcmeRKrk&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Two men arrested in Sydney counter-terrorism investigation into alleged terror attack on Australian soil](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAv0j_yiDdtp-eCnipkLugnUA9m9Q8NdLMJ3WQLhxkDJY7LDtobwL0ykWcg8MCILwAK5htJpwOgTXrSucOFP6qte9MYaHMBonx30PCGgku_DHtbkAN8ps5Mr_x9VYn7P5Bn7jsJJwSXT9lnK_n2D7doxF9C0FzGyC6oBCq9N5arp6pX5kSSuhadtLglrVv3ao6vAUDV4V3jhj75orpujfsnKg==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [France beefs up security after string of lone-wolf attacks](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvqKp9X-DbyF7NatVuJzA3vFeDfzB1AzR_UsBwHy9_iFUajBtUhUG3mDMA1Pkw4TJ0ygGITSrb_cc_2YTc-uWQxayPU7Is-G0SkRYFw85ttM1YvCly85Sz15gUar2X7zIoqKMmNrzT07EzpyCTVzT11V_VFjyALs7rKPNUXk7AYTLSpJ5PT16OrykscvvJ5Om1Fjn69AZEVrSlJdL3v2swCA==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [17,500 Germans Gather to Sing Christmas Carols Against Islamisation](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvlJm_VAG6sy6nb9oF4RXVtfWKcZ9tuUeGvEJokKJxIWUcAF3NLToMeCeEq44h0Hr1gsrry9GBFukGKzEVYPZPf3VDKWp5r6yJWNJyFAtJS-7nxShi-cz7Gm47Xm8qcUJQgHu5_haKnmQLLC9YyqhwexbgvPVcS0Km5ZjqzYBhKsx6hAEhBOXZ1M0b9TtKDsYcl0exvujQxmExvWbwro3x3uBTkeclZfrKxS9O7VHHQgg=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [From Baltic to Asia, East-West aerial confrontations heat up](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAv9o1YEbcl5ZZgVgVmNxC9j4DbZnqcOGiLjeGtUtQ73VS3vU20wrp7HPVfTbOB6C4y6hUO0ccFeYInAnWOcfKK08m8lRgVUEnSerLIXb1tMB4NeM5B6OkQAEXNHLjFRaFbKLg74hM8SqhCecp9ZQUADgDXt5dU5mObphNEDrpsbiU4V4qOMlbbu7NF9aLLFYmaHj1BIO-C9iff7jh45aTHibOGO--Djr_F&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [China ignores EU, offers to help Russia](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvK0O86bWfAsN7vgaJMCGvL7Mu62Xq7CIE_MmyJC0KQRzBEuT5tU3Y6v3tmB8peqnATxfkYDe3qi9yp85hrNjxsRmU8GLs9v82aTA3hUmA3d0Cnar9NrW0ngUn50LNWupX&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Outraging Russia, Ukraine takes big step toward NATO](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvQFyVqvqRsOABF07ChIkdqV8SAaIcS_GlGKmrl7ouguHmjGzBF9O9SUes97FssTocUXc7ji5P-sXwYX2_s_h6_IWkBcDMLlANbMmQrai6fGOLdYz1rCFVhCKjH0G7EPYfAXl22W81Z0c6aT7qE0uUj3E2Tb7LrZb40MvN3vs1DNraTEO_zDg-SQGovC4MTTyI&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Ukraine votes to drop non-aligned status](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvnqWaKDNHnH--bgGCrsDJHjMXTsrulp3dAYVBvbj65nzMTLBjMrxKpde6ZrQYUCq6NKs7Pu45DDUgB-D4O9huG6g95yKNLg2-a9ztZDEP9Zg4CxCTAWaGOs3aWQiSzGvJl1XWEGMpGy8=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Russia, 4-ex-Soviet nations finalize new alliance](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvNvh95fTMkDYPUlez3bXkmuKktBH6HJvyOoUyU1XKUB1BAHvPAPnea9M5cpLdDU5twVrmzu3FIjATAQaMwdNCb16Szg633q75Ddn3rAUGCf0a2FzZCPvFR9WFUiWyBfrXKaLvSOCFP1R5wEL7PlW_Y86WApOCyRi6Xv7j8Ly51ucjchbdCOWmiAzCXjsYeyCPKIgQT7xrqrs=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Russia successfully tests new space rocket](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvsFq1TEJ3mKSiNsb99IJFBkWedm5jDAwlWbMDP9cI7LaVTtLENzg31H6GMPj5fah1n-gnWD5K8VQjF4qWXMWLN2OVXXRLccqN2J_snLSF98ArULZIg7ot6624U2STJYetffqgqJm-CgckKc4anG4wB4lzbzvP2K8wrQ_MdYvansfoeNji75FrLQ==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Iranian official says no plans to resume full ties with US even if nuclear deal reached](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvrSxe5JNtPwim4MKv6H-hnuLrZQX4iyFOZKxXDkG5m-kgV_U_yBsv1pUc-m8tl1MakZJYFFZYo68Jo6IZgr_-UHRpp95G4d2gd2iLlWd3fLglRtOUOmGqmUENDPNkJVCiokv9Y3F0f7YV3A2wbFy7Jk4-PvRRmCcFftNPPpE5JxFumpWoDHzygkyRgCQhXuv3uzb1VBewvD1_RqUmccnrhl6ZqpwfqSlaUo_yY04zc_Wyt2oJJMoSUqCAo2I1FyJn&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [FBI warns of Islamic State threat to Mississippi River bridge](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvVMEBJhAQ6t_g6hd5MU0fbl8c02gxNlf6kknM6-Lm0ho2uxZ-SbiuoIYlMjQED_waRPDomAv2rDwWoJIzl8qxKLSeEmPAo6T6hy-Mtm-9W_q1h_A5u60Xx9cw9TbXsdgADz-5BiMfiV81VtlxH1VFFJVcpx9WHf5pq9HvqLYdidAKAIKVVJ7Gr-azEPTW35Q_W_Pb7H-O4tJ8UdTNzoXa2A==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [US Not Fully Prepared for Nuclear Terrorist Attack](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvtQdj06Eft-ck_Ddahj2f2-kVhRB1-UlnSKS6g3tcFs2WB__P5h_K990aG6YDaiQkSm0uQ2E2YzV7DfNHdExyhCjB6lqhP0E_eJX2Dl-qOiJnn_C5gGliJuvzfKNZAROt8nBbvhnPQ_Y3Hsl41qB9CaBqTgz4qu89Udun2N3ZThDh9R8uyoKx0b1LNd6VcleOnhRvbD0BWiA=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [South Korea steps up cyber security at nuclear plants](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAv3mMfuVftrwZEpC03rmMpMOYk3lb7TT7hYyk6j9KciVXoRb3gl9inp1evCqJKHPrd6ejc_ODcPcC4nAtLLIgvMVqyz9QN-CW5ekFqnfStmgJlR6CiU-k-uTAuIZNAnbQXh0wiIup8mjJl-9c2TDkcBqBalqgDnb-wnVZtre_qV-uWYYD6dUqOn89SZg2I781A&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [At U.N. council, U.S. calls life in North Korea 'living nightmare'](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvMr0f9pXmHCFV48av_5szk3lLE3pn6sbDjD20S9Cp0cnGegkWUvb1V2KdmCVhU8Kzhz73v8I7dqymRRIk840IcPd_66ZXTNZRPVY66Jp6kfpiVkAdllnD8zpDpTx1YAaQSMoMO8TidNW_VeCHOYKolQGpNPmQgxYpMP6YUf-CpNbOj8a-HBI7gZGbj5py_1if&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [China says reports it helped cut off North Korea's Internet 'irresponsible'](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAva3UaIMZDDpq2t69z-J5I4nxb5cpv44Jk5zWNwtZLlp3J5qy1-9mNQWwL0kr_bvXAxaKVszkgYgapSAwGPX_fLW3OzivVBdoeAhOAgg6bWARSPkPNQaUeLJoy8_RADrPrWX6MOBalTu1PSjkkKaP-sGYve4hwzWh-HgC6o_WOmI6Drll_ACzDpdhY-CnAgOrcmylyQlWx70BEmTRt10-9ic7XV0OaUGQrDywLSGt6B4U=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Sony Pictures allows some theaters to show 'The Interview'](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAv9sIOLngfnThLkDmQgn_NH6dGYDqD2AOY7CQEbTaknVlRPeg2JgaM9-GR-wJ1S_bG-Smf6kx6soFt-X4io47VuDsuKfMMvKur3IyR9st-lJQbcz4y-p7FKe9n9BqJtrvL_pi8vg4luM6RKtoGq6UeFUjNUYou8RHSqXG1pEIM6qgd9vLr6BamqUYWLiDpFRH9QSyRpRle7cglAQ7PD2UrXA==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Sony plans to release 'The Interview' on Crackle for free](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvR4fyFAIyoI6FGnRqyCHi92foIl84Mj6RCyUT65P_7IgkT7JQLMHaSHLporqEda53S_ar_6TxoySSNIzY8zsH43xJOzV8HbCBMyBJRfvpiQoNPTQNgKg1TFxG6P6Lgv26gNjKwJmy2lBz7MOwSeI0sQHejldtIxNIma9aNBvhblipQn28MykawU7nPvKvaSRsKjgVnDXB99A=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Obama applauds Sony decision to show 'The Interview'](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvpghi3bolcNU6M1I14NCkRZVXOZfVaeiAq3Suu1X4WXYI2GGUcsYNENkWQXhOxYBuvOCEVn4UHkgaOWT1MgAaV3jGdDby0s0bzW0tmdt6VylS1VWuZydGGcteGI8d7EwUwCblp7ySNtZDKAi5YEUrBSXqU8I1E6JNdrUP8uDG-FWofAlkBvTvMW0y1hIgn3OAVwgLlSFjy5Y=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Anti-cop protesters flood NYC despite de Blasio's appeal](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvCwqjYujWRfj7mWb60b-S1B1xtTKbpLZe70TTdADcFvPVS100qVIoVgPTZ-SOW7i5Jm0n-P1jl-vA5B-kNVpeAvPZgXo-fclk3S--I6YnYDeodFnpbAWDNeEABdnkN5QTugxkfl6ElxZWj-odffN2UHxIfKH7sVkAua-0FgJikvXqNmK9DfUr7OFmjFculq2UTPz2zFJGrwo=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [911 operators made 'anti-police' remarks, causing quarrel with FDNY dispatchers as 2 NYPD cops were dying](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvVJF4u08WOxhikUX9f74fTvpQy-ix4QwQchACHnAWLuMFOLY70ADQBtVQ3jRXXfk6ryRMNYybi5fSIhDdVESs27Jnpb6znKNP7zDhli8WfVjSPK8DK9BP-dDtYTmc7GCl-3jvNGg2FeUnGWtKZxJxTCM-OwWCjyKHYBXgu6SXWns2kvZII_d179GzQvtOsUOBuXWfDUOcjR6GKHY14p-67Q==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Gay Porn Star Turned Cannibal Found Guilty of Murdering Exchange Student](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAv78ZR33zDGog6roD4OYEqqGui9BtC-9xtRgwCkuSD4uWb8e8cqaEfNpfcHcAXjBq3-76vcdiHuuut2OFO4nQAuC_3rkKbiwPI_wlFndloz2zhN7EO4UTIEeNGJIK3wgFYCk3Rabkd59ODeI4ZyAHcO5Tym2558sM53ILYS74Kr46eIgXSlt0Zmb_gSOWfS4Zc&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Record-setting day: Dow closes above 18,000 for first time on powerful growth in GDP](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAv9snj_eN5U2ArYlwxEQKTB04QOMpXGsf_Y_WGep07hDs4r7s_ElQfPJLpIM_Nx9iUOgO8dEhDeM1-1e8pYqr9hK1Xnr1H2jVc7du8kngf9OpWsYsyM5FCTXJYzMfVqd3-Owf5gRlp6QuztpAuZRXx2zwr-qMv_Cyu6jQh-1lpnQM=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [Economic Vital Signs Strongest In a 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--- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | https://files.ctctcdn.com/61c7cfcb201/89b0993f-c1db-464c-95eb-94d200493255.jpg  As you consider your gift giving this season, and your end of the year support, please add PROPHECY UPDATE to your list. 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And it has. Polls indicate that the majority of American Christians (by denominational affiliation e.g. Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Methodists) now believe the Christmas story is mythology. Many ask if it really matters. Yes. More than they know.    Tragically, it's our pastors that have led the stampede into sin.  Harry Emerson Fosdick, pastor of Riverside church in New York, at the time when German Higher Criticism (meaning abandonment of any belief in the Bible as actual truth) said,    "Of course I do not believe in the virgin birth... I do not know any intelligent minister who does".    Professor Barnes Tatum, author of the book In Quest of Jesus, has since called the virgin birth, "theological fiction".    Robert Funk, founder of the Jesus Seminar, called the virgin birth an "insult to modern intelligence that should be abandoned".    The eminent Bishop Sprong, an infamous long-time influence in the Episcopal church, opined that,    "In time, the virgin birth account will join Adam and Eve... as clearly recognized mythological elements in our faith tradition whose purpose was not to describe a literal event but to capture the transcendent dimensions of God in the earthbound words and concepts of first-century human existence".    Translation: It's a myth. But it still has emotional value.    Bell, the infamous emergent pastor of Mars Hill church in Michigan, has asked,    "What if tomorrow someone digs up definitive proof that Jesus had a real, earthly, biological father named Larry, and archeologists find Larry's tomb and do DNA samples and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the virgin birth was really just a bit of mythologizing the Gospel writers threw in to appeal to the followers of the Mithra and Dionysian religious cults that were hugely popular at the time of Jesus, whose gods had virgin births?"    Translation:  "Does it matter?"    I think we have plenty of reason to believe it is historical fact, and it does matter.    For three reasons.  (How very Biblical!)    To begin with, Matthew, who describes the lineage of Jesus, as the future king of Israel, traces the male line from Abraham, through Judah, David, Solomon, and Jechoniah to Jacob, Joseph's father. But Jechoniah was such a wicked king that God decreed that none of Jechoniah's descendants could ever sit on the throne of Judah:    "As surely as I live," declares the LORD, "even if you, Jechoniah son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, were a signet ring on my right hand, I would still pull you off. This is what the LORD says: "Write this man down as childless... For none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah.'" (Jer. 22:30)    Joseph was ineligible to pass on the right to the throne.  But since (according to the  theological mythological "Biblical" story) Joseph was not an actual physical descendent of Jechoniah, that problem was resolved.    The second problem was that inheritance among the Jews passed (including the line to the throne) through sons. Scripture, however documents at least one sister for Mary, but no brothers are mentioned.    Which brings us to the daughters of Zelophehad clause. The five daughters of Zelophehad came to Moses and asked to be able to retain their father's property because there was no son to inherit.  Moses decided that, in the absence of a male heir, daughters could inherit as sons, but only if they married within their own tribe (to keep tribal lands allocated intact, as when women married, what they owned became her husband's property). Essentially, the daughter's husband, by law, became the son that that father did not have. Kind of where we get the phrase son-in-law, (i.e. a son, by law).  And the respective genealogies document that they were both of the tribe of Judah, descended from David through different sons.    So that puts the second problem to bed. Because they were born of different sons, Mary's line also avoided the blood curse. And because Mary had no brothers, she retained right of inheritance (through Moses' ruling on Zelophehad's daughters) which gave her son legal rights to the throne.    But those were technicalities, really. The third one is nothing less than a diabolical dilemma.    At least on the surface.    And our first hint of it is hidden in Exodus:    Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,"This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.  And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb.  Your lamb shall be without blemish. (Exodus 12:2-5 NKJV)    This, as you probably recognize, is the passage in which God institutes the Passover, in which the blood of the sacrificed lamb covered over all those who appropriated the blood for themselves. A foreshadowing of the sacrifice lamb to come who would take away the sin of the world.    And the final, most important requirement was that the lamb had no blemish. Only one without the stain of his own sin could pay the penalty for others.    Only Christ was without his own sin.    "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (II Corinthians 5:21)    So far, so good, right?  We all know that Jesus, despite taking human form, never sinned:    Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.  (I Peter 2:21-23)    Unfortunately, that wasn't the full solution to the problem. All of humanity had come under the curse of sin through Adam and Eve.    "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. (Romans 5:12,17)    Now we really do have a problem. How could Jesus have a human birth and human nature but still be untainted by the human condition?    Interestingly, the Bible consistently says that the sin nature is passed to later generations specifically by the father.  (Look again at the Romans verse above. Through one man's trespass, all died).    And they, as Adam, transgressed the covenant, There they dealt treacherously against me. (Hosea 6:7YLT)    For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. (I Corinthians 15:22)    (I never really picked up on that before, either.)  How does that happen? (What about Eve!)    Interestingly, scientists have recently shown that memories can be passed from father to son through permanent genetic changes at a molecular level (called epigenetic changes) below the level of the DNA sequence.    Which  presents a hint of an actual physiological way that the sins of the father could be passed to their offspring. There's a lot of science to be done in between that and showing a physiological way that mortality is passed specifically from the father. But it is interesting insight into the Christmas story.    One Lutheran Seminary professor confessed that for him, angels, traveling magi, and virgin births were "hard to swallow as reality". He was also of the opinion that you don't have to swallow it to be a Christian.  That particular passage of Scripture has just been misinterpreted all these years.    Rob Bell asks,    "What if, as you study the origin of the word "virgin," you discover that the word "virgin" in the gospel of Matthew actually comes from the book of Isaiah, and then you find out that in the Hebrew language at that time, the word "virgin" could mean several things?".    That's true. The Hebrew word used in the prophecy of the virgin birth is "almah". And "almah", most often in Scripture to mean "virgin", is sometimes used to simply designate a young woman.    But the Greek word in the New Testament is "Parthenos", (stemming from the Parthenon, which housed the Greek vestal virgins). And "Parthenos" always means a virgin.    And the context of the prophecy that forecast Jesus' birth? God had told Ahaz that he had nothing to fear from the Syrians, but Ahaz was having a little trouble believing that. So God told him to ask for a sign. Furthermore, God told him that there was no limit on what he could ask. But Ahaz couldn't bring himself to ask.    So God finally gave Ahaz a sign to look for:    "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14)    The sign Ahaz was to look out for was that a "young woman" would have child?    Doesn't seem like much of a sign. And wouldn't solve the problem. For that, you absolutely needed a virgin birth.    "Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, ... to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. 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 2:4-11)    Great tidings of great joy. The Christ, the Savior promised, born of a virgin through the Holy Spirit, untainted by human sin.  Born in Bethlehem, of the virgin Mary, to save sinners.    From one of those sinners He saved...  Merry Christmas!!! |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | http://ih.constantcontact.com/fs115/1111272225814/img/93.jpg  [**VISIT OUR STORE BY CLICKING HERE**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUUc4nnXWQdlHGt6-JKg0bJUGwlx8oVahU-eC2af1JDrYkzjJIUNzH2veIRovcmV2TaoWoE_ZQ-jaTQqsochdncMc6gsoXnQujV_pSWYpyZiat5BaxNPSLYO9_dKTXm3sSGfhIHdXbNcSIYKBZcGPlypIg6TgUxEZgRhQ1-ibd8th&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  **Dear Reader / Supporter,**    As our way of saying thanks for all you do, we are giving you 50% off all DVD orders, including bundles, from now to 2015. Just enter the following code when checking out, **GIFT50**, you can use this code as many times as you like, thank you!      **READ SOME OF OUR REVIEWS:**    **"Awesome - Great Work - Congratulations!"  - D. Koerner**    **"I found it really moving" - D. Bower**    **"The scene inside the church was awesome. I need to go home and lay on my face. Great work man!"- R. Miller**    **"Awesome video! I watched it last night with my family, and we loved it, and plan to share the word about it" -   C. Young**    **"My wife and I watched the video and it is outstanding. Biblically solid...... we especially like the clear bible referencing and quoting. The video is a moving tapestry tightly weaved with spectacular photography, bible references, and the signs of the times put together like a jigsaw puzzle. The gospel is presented clearly with tender love. We pray that this DVD gets distributed far and wide. I hope youth ministers have the courage to show this DVD rather than the garbage materials of the emergent church movement." - John Wicklund Board President for Olive Tree Ministries**    **"I received The End of Times DVD today. It is Superb! For those that don't know much, or anything about Bible Prophecy, this DVD should really open their eyes, a great teaching tool. For those that have grown cold or indifferent in the Lord, this should awaken them." T. Nelson**    **"The DVD provides an effective mix of biblical teaching and history, interspersed with the happenings in Israel today.  Particularly effective is the emotional ending showing the return of Jewish people worldwide back to Israel and traveling with a sense of destiny.  Many commentators have said Israel is God's hour hand, Jerusalem is the minute hand, and the Temple Mount is the second hand on God's timepiece.  The video is a great introduction and myth-buster for those who do not know of the importance of Israel in God's eyes or who believe Israel has as much significance in today's world as Madagascar or the Canary Islands." - John Wicklund, Chairman Olive Tree Ministries Board of Directors**    **Got the DVD today and just finished watching it...outstanding!!! Loved it!!! - G. Madison - Oklahoma**    **I watched "Israel God's Timepiece" last night and thoroughly enjoyed it. I have loved Israel ever since I read the book "Exodus", when I was in the Army in 1958. I do everything I can to support Israel and get people involved in what they are going through, and more than that, to pray for Peace in Jerusalem, according to Psalm 122. Your DVD was a fitting tribute to this wonderful, spectacular country and God's very own "baby". Thanks for taking the time to put it together. Very well done. - J. Masters - Mississippi**    **It is really a professional production and I see why it is so well received. In fact we felt it is actually the best film we have seen on end time events. - Bill & Brenda Hicks**    **At first I thought it was going to be another routine message but as it progressed it became more and more impressive. It was a great message. Congratulations on a very well presented and produced DVD. - R. Webb - Williamsburg**    **Another effective witness from Randy and Prophecy Update. The "There will be Tribulation" video describes the purpose and the sequence of events during the final seven years prior to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The linkage to many Old Testament prophecies clearly show the importance of the nation of Israel to this seven-year period. The pictures in the video document a world already full of tribulation- how terrible will be those seven years. Great teaching tool for small groups and youth ministers to present the gospel message through the topic of**  **bible prophecy. - John Wicklund Chair- Olive Tree Ministries Board of**  **Directors**    **"Moving and Inspirational" - D. Koerner, Bakersfield, CA**    **"Your Presentation will literally scare the h-ll out some people. There is enough scripture and warnings of what is coming to cause, anyone, who has put off accepting the Lord's salvation through Jesus to repent now!" - Don Mills - Director of Programming - CSN Radio - Twin Falls, ID**      **Brother Randy, to say it was a great movie documentary is an understatement. Thank you for doing the Lord's work. This movie gave me the chills. - Terrance Alan - Kaukauna, WI**      **Thanks so much for the DVD There will be Tribulation...I watched it the other day, finally.   It is well done and really holds your attention. In fact, it's unrelenting...which of course is what it needs to be. - Rich and JoAnne - Temecula, CA**      [**VISIT OUR STORE BY CLICKING HERE**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUUc4nnXWQdlHGt6-JKg0bJUGwlx8oVahU-eC2af1JDrYkzjJIUNzH2veIRovcmV2TaoWoE_ZQ-jaTQqsochdncMc6gsoXnQujV_pSWYpyZiat5BaxNPSLYO9_dKTXm3sSGfhIHdXbNcSIYKBZcGPlypIg6TgUxEZgRhQ1-ibd8th&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==) |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | http://ih.constantcontact.com/fs115/1111272225814/img/91.jpg  [To order and more information - Click Here](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUdITl2k2UXt7K_FjkSzxh2LHEqhmlfypkNdgkekjt0VcRb68Tp23lOwfcG6lycdkhgA8UOSc6upW2FMOjRn4TcFk5Fx1id6suEH8kORdRQmCdYhiKoJIhMJd4ng-RoVAdL9VASL0rfykYXvfJxUi-AKrjUps-pPBe9ewfkumLnBRJihduykNZmi5We4aaS_QpeOTQd-JiHQetuZPSMFmWSRKKY57xE1gdit8ns3LRbEJOHGXxn4i3EFy9Y5UzZHPwEeMxx2eQTTse5lu1Y1qp3FsKFkhBa10ALMxy9t-_V6L&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==) |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | **The Christmas Story and the Future** - By Don McGee -  [http://www.raptureready.com/soap2/mcgee21.html](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAv-3OaaujkOmeYq4f1jGPO2IVfb1C1GNGYkERbO5nzDGbrDb-otDHm8k7Sfqh1qT743gRs2laXzK9akqFH-sBmxSOAsoJKQcCOdl0rc5B5H6Yvjs4AzS08qv8_xE6ft5zBVQMc-JAJT9c=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)      The birth of Jesus is recorded in some detail in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Matthew's record, intended for Jewish readers, explained that there was no doubt whatsoever that Jesus of Nazareth was their long-awaited Messiah, the Son of David.    On the other hand Luke wrote to a Gentile whose name was Theophilus (as was the book of Acts). Though Luke relied on Old Testament prophecies as did Matthew, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to offer information to the Gentiles that the Jews would have already known.    So maybe that is why Luke mentioned two things in the second chapter that Gentiles would have to be aware of in order to have a better understanding of the Jewishness of Jesus and His purposes-both short range and long range. In verse 25 he mentions Simeon, a man who "was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel..."    Then in verse 38 he mentions, Anna, an aged woman, who was among those, "who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem."    So, what is the consolation of Israel and the redemption of Jerusalem? And how many Jewish people were there who might have been, like Simeon and Anna, looking for some event or someone's appearance that would be radically outside the status-quo of the Roman world?    Further, why would understanding those terms be important to a Gentile student of Christianity? The answer to the second question is both obvious and simple; there were not very many Jews aggressively looking for Messiah.    The answer to the third question is important because the greatest part of the modern church has no idea about the Jewishness of Jesus and Christianity, nor does it have a good biblical grasp of the future as it relates to current events. But, it is the answer to the first question that puts everything into prophetic perspective. That is, the consolation of Israel and the redemption of Jerusalem go far beyond the events of Jesus' birth, and that is something the church must know.    The details of this are interesting. For example, many Christians are in something of a fog when it comes to the Israel-centric nature of current events and what is going to happen globally in the near future. Further, they seem to relate to and measure time on God's prophetic clock solely in context of eons of years thus ignoring the biblical concept of seasons of time.    The basic idea of consolation has to do with comforting someone who is in sorrow, and there can be no doubt Israel was in a sorrowful condition when Jesus was born. The Romans had been running things overall in Israel for about 40 years and there was no way for the Jewish people to wrangle out from under the iron-boot of Rome. And with this iron-boot came a real quandary of a problem for them, especially for those who still gave at least a head-nod to Judaism.    The people were being ruled directly by Herod the Great, a tyrant who had no regard for the historical witness of God in the nation, and for that matter neither did most of the Jewish people except for outward ceremonial activities.    Herod was the personification of vanity and any threat to his position at the top of the political pile was quickly dealt with. Even family members were killed at his whim. He was called a madman, a murderer and a man who was "prepared to commit any crime in order to gratify his unbounded ambition (Herod I, in the Jewish Encyclopedia). His idea of success was pleasing Caesar and thus keeping his job.    Augustus Caesar was the first Emperor of the Roman Empire and was considered to be a god. Thus, Herod imposed a sacrifice upon the people directed toward the Roman Emperor; a ceremony which was presided over in some fashion by the Jewish priests. Though the people had little regard for God, this was hard for them to swallow. Further, in order to be the great builder that he was, Herod imposed taxes to such severity that multitudes were in poverty.    And in addition to all of that, the people were forced to pay a Temple tax. The stress was financial because of taxes and emotional because of emperor worship. Historians say this kind of national exasperation is hard to underestimate.    Consider now Luke's description of the presentation of Jesus in Jerusalem. There is nothing extraordinary in the events leading up to the declarations of Simeon and Anna. For example, there is no record of a heavenly vision given to them, and Joseph and Mary certainly did not give them information that would have led to their words. What they said was essentially the result of the Holy Spirit's inspiration, and nothing more is actually needed.    As a point of interest, I ask you to pardon me if I take just a short detour. Luke said Joseph took Mary and the baby to Jerusalem for the fulfillment of certain Jewish rituals required by the Law. One of those rituals was to make a sacrifice (Leviticus 5), and another was to circumcise Him (Genesis 17:9ff).    Actually, the ritual of circumcision was not of the Mosaic Law, but was part of the covenant God made with Abraham long before the Law was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. God required that the procedure be performed on the eighth day of a baby boy's life.    There are two things to note regarding this matter. First, God required it as a sign of the everlasting covenant between Him and Abraham and his descendants. Second, it was to be done specifically on the eighth day. Why on the eighth day?    Bert Thompson, Ph.D., explained it clearly and it has to do with a baby boy's natural production of prothrombin in the liver; a chemical which is necessary for good blood coagulation. On the eighth day of a little boy's life the prothrombin level is above 100% of normal which makes it the perfect day for the procedure. Lesson? Never second-guess God on anything. Never. On anything. [1]    That baby boy was the consolation of Israel in human flesh, the One whose life and death were and are inextricably joined to the nation and to the very land itself. Never had God before, nor has He since joined Himself to any group of people nationally. Contrary to those who teach the heretical theory of British Israelism, there is no national (or religious) group on planet earth that has usurped the place of the Jews and Israel in God's plan.    The theory of British Israelism has been around for centuries, but was made more popular by Herbert W. Armstrong and his Worldwide Church of God. It simply says that the northern ten tribes are lost and that they migrated to England and then, of course, to America. There are two things to note about that: One, the tribes are not lost, and two, the covenants of God with the Jews involve the actual, physical land of Israel; not the land of the UK nor of the U.S. nor of any other nation.    The redemption of Jerusalem: Luke does not quote Anna as saying, "The redemption of Jerusalem." And I will not put those words in her mouth. With that said, from the context-it is reasonable to think she might have said those very words as she gazed upon the infant Jesus. More important, though, is the truth that she was looking for the redemption of Jerusalem, and she saw it in the person of that baby boy.    Do not doubt for one second that Jerusalem is a Jewish city, that it is the capital of Israel, that it is God's special city, and that Messiah is returning there. But, today the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is under Islamic control with the Islamic Dome of the Rock in its skyline. That situation, however, will be changed in the not-to-distant future.    People argue that the Jews might rebuild their Temple along side the Dome on the mount. I do not believe that will happen, but there is one thing of which we can be sure. King Jesus will never share the Temple Mount with a pagan shrine, and especially so with a shrine that is the icon of global bloodshed and seething anti-Semitism.    The meaning of "redemption" is to buy back. For example, to lose possession of something that is rightfully yours and then to buy it back. The price has already been paid. What is still lacking is taking possession of it, and that will happen at Jesus' Second Coming. That event will be preceded by the death of two-thirds of the Jewish people resulting in a remnant being saved. Read all about it in Zechariah 12-14.    Even in those dark days of coming global Tribulation prior to the Second Coming, the Jews will remain resistant to His pleading voice, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.    Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!" (Matthew 23:37-39).    Only when they will be at the end of themselves, when absolute extermination is at hand, will they recognize that Jesus is indeed their Messiah.    Most Christians are familiar with the redemption of humans. We sing about being redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and about the redemption of our bodies at the return of Jesus for His church. That is true. But what most Christians reject or ignore is that the earth will be redeemed by God, and that an actual physical place, Jerusalem, will have a very special role to play in all of it.    There is more to it than what can be described with mere human words, but looking at it from the broad perspective we can see that what the prophet Zechariah said about God's relationship with Jerusalem will come to fruition in what appears to be the near future (Zechariah 8:1-8). Jerusalem is soon to be redeemed with the Temple Mt. returning to Jewish control.    But until then there is much suffering in store for the Jewish people, their land and their capital city. The world will gather against Israel and against Jerusalem in frothing hatred. They will be defenseless because their trust will have been in a benefactor the Bible calls Antichrist; one who will betray that trust. The possessions of the Jewish people will be looted once again.    The women of Jerusalem will be raped as is always the case in warfare. When all seems lost Jesus will appear and destroy those nations by simply speaking a Word (Revelation 19:15). That same event is described in Zechariah 14:12ff.    What aged Simeon and Anna saw dimly, and so could not fully understand, about Jesus being the consolation of Israel and the redemption of Jerusalem is yet future. A future that is far more immediate than distant.    What we often fail to see is that the Christmas story has much to say about the future.    Endnotes [1] www.apologeticspress.org    Author contact: csm01@att.net |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | **Regifting** - By Howard Green -  [http://www.raptureready.com/soap2/green16.html](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUQzt-akdgsAvPZYaapKnLx-ylpelQig8WCeIUfBg4LC6p_nh-Q7G7dgqQPAiWK6C6yRlFCxHykgZMnor3K6lhXYLgZ25y5s_JA_5DknJjPT2HbUpKKiZJTMDsAnhPvcGRrM-TYRKhDxmKtdqKFiuYIE=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)       Regifting is the act of taking a gift that has been received and giving it to someone else. When it comes to Christmas gifts and all of the exchanging that goes along with this time of year, the only expectation I have is to simply enjoy friends and loved ones no matter what I give or receive. For many people, this can be a very stressful time of the year. Gift giving and receiving seems to take the joy right out of the season.     People get so worked up over buying the "perfect gift" or they may get disappointed by not receiving the "perfect gift" from someone. On the other hand...you may be content in knowing that this season is really all about Jesus and the exchange of gifts causes no drama in your life.     I don't know how you feel about regifting but as Christians...we have the ultimate opportunity to regift. Christians have received the perfect, unmerited, free gift of salvation from Jesus. All of us have the opportunity to regift this salvation we received. The difference with 'kingdom regifting' is that we keep the original gift, but this priceless treasure simply and beautifully replicates itself over and over again by God's grace and mercy.     As believers we need to remember that this gift of salvation we received wasn't cheap. I sometimes find myself a bit bothered by the cavalier, cleaver, and at times...even silly approaches some folks have toward evangelism.     This gift of salvation isn't some commodity to be peddled. Salvation isn't some trinket we need to try to package into a nice gift box. Salespeople explain the features and benefits of an item in hopes of "persuading" a buyer to want the product. We don't need cleaver programs, formulas, or campaigns to get people to accept Jesus.      I don't know where this idea or notion came from, but I believe it stems from some inside the church not having a realistic view of their former hopeless state, repentance, and the priceless gift of salvation.     Who are the believers that are effective witness for Christ? It is my belief that they are those who came under conviction and were persuaded of their hopeless and wretched state without Jesus. For these people, conversion wasn't simply a life enhancement or a one time commitment and then life continues as before and get heaven in the end.     Receiving this gift of salvation was completely an act of the Holy Spirit. God in His mercy reached down and exposed our heart for what it was:  hopelessly wicked. Far from feeling sorry or a little guilt, when people are truly convicted, repentant, and transformed by the Lord......they truly can appreciate the value of the gift of salvation.     Ephesians 2:8:  "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."    Romans 5:6-11: " For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person-though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die- but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."    Friends...if you are reading this and are a Christian, you have received the most precious gift in the world. It is of paramount importance that we represent this gift to others in a way that reflects it's true worth. This is done every time we share the gospel with others. The gospel is simply:     I was hopeless before a holy God. I had no hope of eternal life apart from the atoning work of Jesus on the cross. I believe God raised Him from the dead and confess Him as Lord. When a person sees that kind of brokenness and now restoration through Jesus in us.......that gift is represented well.     This Christmas week the world is giving, receiving, and regifting. As believers, let's regift the gospel of Christ to others. We can do this throughout the year because even though the hurts of this life tend to be magnified this time of year....they are always present. People are suffering from the loss of a spouse, death of a child, cancer diagnosis, job loss, foreclosure, or the bottom has simply fallen out.     People need hope and while we can't promise things will get better, we know the one who brings salvation and true peace. Tell people your story.....how you were going to hell without the Savior. Tell them how the gospel changed your life. Tell them there is hope in Jesus for this life and for the life to come.     Ask to pray with them, talk with them, or simply be there, but do so with the purpose of presenting Jesus to people who desperately need Him. Regifting the gospel is truly an act of love.     As I close, here are Christmas wishes from my wife, Erika:    Where's the Joy?     Christmas is a time of joy but for so many this year,  it is impossible to find it. How can we have joy when we see our life and others around us is filled with hardship, disease, conflict and struggling, having absolutely zero control over our circumstances? We need some good news and even though we know that no human being is able to promise us anything, in our desparate need for hope, we are easily satisfied with their assurances that all will work out and get better in the end.  Except that we know that we are drawing more on wishful thinking than on a true hope and it provides little comfort.     So where did the idea of joy, good tithing and peace come from?  A bunch of confused, delusional optimists out of touch with reality?   Nope, they were perfectly sound minded and they got it.  That's the good news.     There is one who is able to make promises and keep them but only faith makes it possible to bank on them.  His promises are making it possible to go through struggles with real power, dignity and purpose and joyful expectation of better things for those who love him.  He has promised.     Without this faith,"a man can see only things close at hand, and is as one bowed downward to the earth, groping a dreary way, with neither hope nor exaltation at the end."  (Unknown author.)     Christmas is a time of opening presents. There is one Christmas gift that many still snub and leave unopened.  My wish is for all this year to finally open the gift that Christ has offered .     2 Peter 1:4:  "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life, he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature."    He has made joy possible for all, regardless of birth, color, status, culture or family religion.   May you find it this season.     Merry Christmas!      All for Him,     Howard and Erika Green |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | **The Daily Jot: A time to be bold** - Bill Wilson - [www.dailyjot.com](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUY5LdDJfGqPJ_QmutsuJjG--pKKj2Hp7CaTeE2NlHik5ycmSd9TnMElQB9cteRlhFU8-V0lyB-mux_mZfmNBQQrbiJpG3zGbCGX_ryluBdKDZf-9AU6fAAM=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)      There is no religion other than Christianity that causes such division around the world.  A friend of mine said it is because Christianity is real.  It reaches to the depth of the soul.  There is no other faith that gives freedom of choice.  There is no other faith that does not require works to get into heaven.  There is no other faith that treats truth as an absolute. There is no other belief that depends on the mercy of its god, but is given total assurance of salvation by simply a step of true faith.  And there is no other faith that requires only an acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal savior as the sole means for attaining everlasting life.    And Jesus is the stumbling stone.  I was listening to a secular radio program while driving into town the other day.  The morning announcer was saying that Christians, such as himself, should not be afraid to say Merry Christmas and stand up for their beliefs.  A caller identified himself as an evangelical Christian.  He said that Christians should not be afraid to speak of the true meaning of Christmas, which to him was all about grace and love and mercy.  In his three minutes on the air, this evangelical did not once mention Jesus Christ.  The announcer reminded the caller that he missed the entire reason for Christmas-Jesus Christ coming to give salvation to all who receive Him.    Herein lies the rub with Christians.  Many evangelical Christians have become uncomfortable saying the name Jesus Christ.  I'm not sure how you can evangelize without mentioning Jesus because, sooner or later, it comes down to whether a person accepts Jesus as their personal savior.  A missionary friend of mine said he once visited a church in San Francisco with a non believer.  The service had lively worship, contemporary preaching and they baptized a young man in the name of all that is good and just and righteous.  In a discussion afterwards, the non-believer found it strange that Jesus was never mentioned in the service.    In Matthew 10:32 thru 37, Jesus puts it on the line.  He says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.  But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.  Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.  For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.  And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.  He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Be bold in Jesus. |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | **Daily Devotion: Why Did Jesus Come?** - Greg Laurie - [www.harvest.org](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUY5LdDJfGqPJMOLw1GrUhYUU9Sy8aXl80oMyFimbffKa13Jd0H6q4QNOZn34pZAMW9vp8Q4Q2t0p-NT3hTT7338sW4wLThevMzVt3wqmA9u06cjEYE3DpcM=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)      I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.  -John 10:10    This has been a busy time of year for almost everyone. For us as Christians, it's been a joyful celebration of the birth of Jesus. We marvel at the fact that God humbled Himself and was born in a cave. But why did He come?    First, Jesus Christ came to proclaim good news to the spiritually hurting, to preach the good news to us.    He came to heal the broken-hearted. Medical science has found ways to reduce and even remove pain. But there is no cure for a broken heart.    Jesus came to set people free who are bound by sin. Jesus came to open our spiritual eyes to our spiritual need.    He came to lift up those who are crushed by life. He came to give us abundant life. Jesus came to lift us from the physical realm of the senses to the spiritual realm to show us that there is more to life.    He came to give His life for us. Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He came to die. Jesus Christ came to this earth to seek and save those of us who are lost, just as a shepherd seeks a lost sheep.    So in all of this hustle and bustle, wrapping paper, mistletoe, and brightly colored lights, let's get down to the bottom line. Christmas is about God sending His Son to die on a cross. He was born to die, to give us abundant life, to give us a life that is worth living. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | **FROM THE HEART**  **http://ih.constantcontact.com/fs115/1111272225814/img/49.jpg**    **PLEASE REMEMBER PROPHECY UPDATE IN YOUR CHRISTMAS AND YEAR END GIVING - THANKS!**  **IF YOU HAVE BEEN BLESSED THROUGH THIS MINISTRY, THEN WE ASK THAT YOU WOULD PLEASE REMEMBER PROPHECY UPDATE IN YOUR GIVING - WE ARE TRULY, TRULY, THANKFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT**   Prophecy Update has no corporate sponsors. This ministry is paid for and prayed for by readers and supporters. Without your support, there would be no Prophecy Update, Please pray about becoming a monthly supporter - thanks!  http://ih.constantcontact.com/fs115/1111272225814/img/5.jpg  **If ever there was a time to invest in God's Kingdom, it's now!**  **What on earth are you doing for Heaven's Sake?**  **"Share in the Blessings and Rewards that will last Forever!"**  "Folks, it's all beginning to unravel. America is in more danger of falling than at any time in its history. But I believe Bible prophecy predicts this very decline. From this point on, we believers have to get serious. We are going to face discouragement, disillusionment and, most certainly, persecution in the time between now and the Rapture. But don't be discouraged or disillusioned. The coming turmoil will provide us unrivaled opportunities to share the good news of the Gospel. So be ready to share your faith and your hope with those who need Christ. We still have time to reap a great harvest of souls for God's kingdom!" - Hal Lindsey  **1) We need your prayers!**- We proclaim the Truth of the Word of God and we are under constant spiritual and sometimes even physical attack.  **2) We need your encouragement!**- We need to hear from you, let us know how the Lord is blessing you through this ministry so that we can share it with others.  **3) We need your input! -** If you have a prophetic article or story or if there is a news related item we missed, let us know.  **4) We need your financial support!**- To put it quite simply, without your support, there would be no Prophecy Update.  I ask that you would prayerfully consider partnering with us to get the Word out and keep the world informed. Remember, your gift, no matter how small, does make a difference! You will be helping to touch lives, around the world, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, thanks to the internet your generosity carries a global impact! - Thanks!  **Our Prayer for You**- "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else." 2 Corinthians 9:10-13  Prophecy Update is a **501 (c) (3) tax exempt** - non-profit organization, and all your donations are tax deductible.  If you have been blessed by Prophecy Update and would like to help support this ministry financially. 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Box 40516**  **Bakersfield, CA 93384-0516** |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | **FEATURED ARTICLE** |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | | http://img.constantcontact.com/letters/images/1101116784221/S.gif | |  |  | | --- | | **Featured Article: How DID ''Christ'' Get Into ''Christmas'' Anyway?** - Jack Kinsella - [www.omegaletter.com](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUSFTLA73aAVUy1potFfZ4GCQWFSwZTK9zG796echryhdJUOK8OMGiXdfVcvcNM75ERlyaePvDRZq6jCA-2_bqOIv7tS2LJZoWHcD7c9ODqao0ERBrVHDu9Q=&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)      Every year at this time, the war on Christmas heats up with one side freaking out about Santa Claus violating the alleged 'separation clause' and the other side bearing signs saying, "Remember to keep the "Christ" in Christmas."    Well, much as I hate being a bubble buster, let us dispose of the main issues first.    "Santa Claus" is not a religious figure.  Neither is he necessarily a Christian.  Indeed, Christians are more likely to use the nickname "Satan Claws" to refer to the jolly old elf than they are to mistake him for a religious icon.    America's Santa Claus is really a Dutchman.  New York City was originally settled by the Dutch, who named it "New Amsterdam".  It was originally founded as a Dutch fur trading settlement in what is now Manhattan.    In 1664, the English conquered the area and renamed it "New York" after the Duke of York and Albany.  The Dutch briefly regained it in 1673, renaming the city "New Orange", before permanently ceding the colony of New Netherland to the English for what is now Suriname in November 1674.    Some area names are still reminiscent of the Dutch period, most notably Flushing (Dutch town of Vlissingen), Harlem (Dutch town of Haarlem) and Brooklyn (Dutch town of Breukelen).  The Dutch also brought Sinterklass, a mythical figure modeled after the Dutch patron saint of Amsterdam, St. Nicholas.    Before moving forward, let's set the WayBack Machine to the 4th century Roman Empire, led by the Emperor Constantine, to provide some historical context and background.    Legend says that Constantine saw a vision of a cross  in the sky on the eve of battle, together with the words, "in this sign conquer".    Constantine ordered his soldiers to paint crosses on their shields, and when the battle was over, Constantine's forces held the field.  Constantine then converted to Christianity, and in 313 he issued the Edict of Milan, declaring Christianity the state religion of Rome.    The problem facing Constantine was that the Romans already had a pantheon of gods, with temples in every city in the Empire.  Constantine could not afford to put down a religious rebellion, so instead he worked out a religious compromise.    Roman coins minted for almost a decade after the Battle of Milvian Bridge still bore the images of Roman gods and goddesses.  Then Constantine began to incorporate the pagan temples and symbols and trappings into the Roman state version of  Christianity.    Gradually, these gods and goddesses were incorporated into Constantine's new religion, reinvented as Christian 'patron saints'.    The statues of Babylonian gods Nimrod, Semiramus and Tammuz became statues of Joseph, Mary and Baby Jesus.  Statues of Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of love, became statues of Mary, Queen of Heaven.    The Mesopotamians, who believed in many gods, held a festival in support of their chief god, Marduk, because they believed that he battled the monsters of chaos at the beginning of each winter.    The Babylonians celebrated each new year with a 12-day festival, called Zagmuth.  It is from this festival that the 12 days of Christmas is believed to have originated.    The date of December 25th comes from Rome and was a celebration of the god, Saturn, and the rebirth of the sun god.    The feast of Saturnalia was cause for much wild excitement and celebration. Gift giving and merriment filled the temples of ancient Rome, as sacred priests of Saturn, called dendrophori, carried wreaths of evergreen boughs in procession.    In pre-Christian Germany, the evergreen tree was used in worship and celebration of the yule god, also in observance of the resurrected sun god.    The evergreen tree was a symbol of the essence of life and was regarded as a phallic symbol in fertility worship.  During the winter in ancient Scandinavia there would be a certain amount of days where the sun would not shine.    Upon the return of the first sunlight, the Scandinavians would hold a festival called the Yuletide.    A Yule log would be burned in a special fire, and everyone would gather around the fire and hold a great feast.  To remind themselves that the spring and summer would surely return again, people in some areas of Scandinavia would tie apples to tree branches.    Both holly and mistletoe were hung in doorways of temples and homes to invoke powers of fertility in those who stood beneath and kissed, causing the spirits of the god and goddess to enter them.  The holly wood was used by witches to make wands.    The legend of St Nicholas, or Sinterklass, parallels the pre-Christian worship of the Germanic god, Odin.  Odin and Sinterklass shared a number of attributes, such as traveling through the air astride a mythical horse, together with a staff of mischievous elves that help Sinterklass in his annual visits.    During the Reformation, Protestants renamed the bringer of gifts from Sinterklass to the Christ Child, or Christkindl -- which was corrupted into the English,  "Kris Kringle".    In 1821, the book "A New-year's present, to the little ones from five to twelve" was published in New York.  It contained Old Santeclaus, an anonymous poem describing an old man on a reindeer sleigh, bringing presents to children.    It was followed up by the 1823 poem, "The Night Before Christmas" by Clement Clarke Moore. An 1863 Harper's Weekly reprint featured a drawing of a fat man with a long white beard by cartoonist Thomas Nast.    Clement Clarke Moore invented the eight tiny reindeer and named them in his poem.  The ninth, Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer was invented in a 1939 booklet written by Robert May and published by Montgomery Ward.    The story is owned by The Rudolph Company, L.P. and, despite its popularity, it is not in the public domain, but is under license owned by the company.  The song was written by May's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, and became a hit for cowboy singer Gene Autry in 1949.    Department store Santas were invented in Massachusetts in the 1890's.    In the 1930's, the Coca Cola company adopted "Santa Claus" as its trademark, creating the image of the modern American Santa Claus that morons like the ACLU now claim is a "religious" figure.    In the Left's knee-jerk, blind hatred of all things Christian, it now insists on banning Santa Claus as a religious figure in most schools.    Not because Santa Claus is a fraud, but because in their confusion, they think that he is a Christian icon.    Assessment:    Before you get all angry at Santa Claus and start tearing down your tree, tinsel and decorations in order to return to the true meaning of Christmas, there IS no true meaning of Christmas.    As noted, Christmas has nothing to do with Christ's birth -- Jesus was most probably born in the spring or fall, based on the Bible's identification of the shepherds tending their sheep atop a hilltop, rather than down in a valley where they would normally be during the winter.    The Bible mentions the birth of Christ because the babe in the manger would grow up to become the Savior of the world.  But it wasn't His birth that saves us.  He was born a helpless baby, like the rest of us.    At His birth, He had not made a Name for Himself.  He had done no mighty works.  What the Bible celebrates at His birth is what He would accomplish with His death.    "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth." (Ecclesiastes 7:1)    If there is a true meaning of Christmas, it is that it began the process that would culminate thirty-three years later with His death and Resurrection.    In the most literal sense, the true meaning of Christmas is that it is the beginning of Easter.    Historically speaking, Jesus wasn't the reason for the season. The reason for the season was Roman politics.  So, what do we do about Christmas?    Should Christians celebrate it?  I can find no reason why they shouldn't.    Even though Christmas is a Roman invention and Santa is a Dutchman reinvented as a pitchman for Coke, the world sees them both as representatives of Christianity.    They aren't representative of Christianity at all, but the enemy (and his idiot minions) think that they are.  And anything that bothers the enemy is ok by me.    In recent years, there has erupted a war on Christmas. Why it that?  Because while Jesus was never the reason for the season historically, for Christians, He is the reason for the season now.    So at Christmas, everybody hears about Jesus in some form or another, thanks to the war on Christmas, and Satan hates that.    His invention of Santa Claus backfired -- Santa was supposed to become the reason for the season, crowding Jesus out of the picture, but instead, even his own minions equate Santa Claus with Jesus Christ.    Instead of kids forgetting all about Jesus and focusing on Santa and Rudolf and presents Christmas trees and all the trappings, every year at about this time, a war erupts over Christmas and Santa Claus and Rudolf.    Once again, Satan's reach has exceeded his grasp.  Instead of it being exclusively dedicated to greed and selfishness and capitalism, every year a battle erupts over the "reason for the season" -- which always takes the focus off of Satan Claws and his minions and puts it back on Jesus.    The harder Satan tries to remove Jesus from the picture, the more central He becomes, which is not only as it should be, but also very instructive.  Satan made the same mistake two thousand years ago.    "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Corinthians 2:8)    So in essence, the war on Christmas is a war between Satan and his minions, not a war between the forces of secularism and the forces of Christ.    So should Christians celebrate Christmas?  What does the Bible say?    "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." (Romans 14:6)    The war on Christmas is intended to side-track Christians but instead, it just keeps rolling back over on the secularists.  The more that the ACLU tries to turn Santa Claus into a religious icon, the more ridiculous and desperate the enemy appears to be.    "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." (Romas 14:20)    There is no sin in celebrating Christmas as the Lord's birthday.  If one is regarding it to the Lord, then one is honoring the Lord and there is no sin in that.    Christians celebrating Christmas makes the enemy very angry, or he would not be fighting against it so hard.  So this year, I'm going to celebrate it as hard as I can.    Thank You, Jesus, for stepping out of eternity and into space and time to take on the form of a mortal man.  This Christmas, I will reflect on the kind of love that took, knowing that He knew what awaited Him at the end, before it ever began.    And, knowing how mad it makes the enemy, I'm going to enjoy it even more than usual.    Don't let the enemy steal the liberty procured for you at the Cross.  Be happy before God this Christmas, knowing that He wants you to be.    "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. "(Romans 14:22)    And may God bless us, every one! |  |  | | --- | | [Gray](http://ui.constantcontact.com/sa/fwtf.jsp?m=1111272225814&a=1119589824972&ea=rthomas%40bak.rr.com)  **If You Died Today, Would You Go To Heaven?**  Find out, visit:  [www.thegoodtest.net](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUY5LdDJfGqPJVseY1nr8ifjcyk6B27mkbtvGI1Z6IWuOgDAAKK8222PAzIcBVqCr__X3_QqChUHtG5s4ou5Sxdg0VMbcitgcdgSDsXAaVhq_pb4HrQZqY2q-kXOiZtPh9A==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [www.gotquestions.org](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUY5LdDJfGqPJvrn7Wl1M3z_LZtsbuAEH5Zhw3gxhhnDvvXFc2yxgAjlClY67e3E4vHFvRokPkKh9YEf_JzF1TEqpg9msubLcjKkPXBwlM95EUM18oODTg-5FiC6dmnCy6Q==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  [www.wayofthemaster.com](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Xh2DbqjnWzogEuAkI3U_EqRJqPv9sVntY_tbIg3HptzxBfyXGWXsUY5LdDJfGqPJBoyJTPzLxE4p2C76Rh5LKViAEghJ90zPHsntVEqnc-WAD5J0BqV7qqicMN9GUUGo5rriXIpRGFmZPvVgZtNDxsrTYQmq8XXRUnZ4gh8Q_9q4R62ktlOF5A==&c=7trlAT_b6018vpKWIV2l7gHPagnGt8QuQRaBmDLSuwPG0nIgQ_un8w==&ch=MvXf7CtNJnNN-pKY8MflR56MrMj7_Ij10Vvuk3BxQBJ68u0CHI0G0w==)  **Prophecy Update - 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