

FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

ANCIENT ANSWERS TO MODERN QUESTIONS

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Why was Jesus Christ born?

By Novella Whiteley, Bixby, Oklahoma

Was it so department stores could sell millions of dollars of merchandise to people who could ill afford to spend so much? Or was it so people could create a false god for their children to call "Santa Claus?" Or was it simply to give us the right, the "ok" to lie? Is it really acceptable with God to tell children that there is someone else, other than Himself, who knows when they are good or bad?

Was Christ born so a day could be set aside for the wealthy to enjoy more than the poor?

This is done every year in honor of Jesus Christ's birth! What does "Christmas" have to do with our Savior's birth? Christmas looks good on the outside. Trees are beautiful, lights are bright, presents are fun to receive, and family dinners are great.

Do we have the right to say God approves of these festivities because we do them in honor of Jesus Christ's birth?

As Christians, isn't it our responsibility to educate ourselves on the origins of Christmas? God tells us to *prove all things* (1 Thessalonians 5:21). But most people do not want to know the truth and would rather just accept and be conformed to what the world has to offer.

And besides, "It's what's in our hearts that counts, right?" We need to remember what sets man apart from the animals. God gave us the intellect with which to think, reason, and learn. Animals are creatures of habit relying solely on instinct. Man has the ability to

think and Christians should not be creatures of uninformed habit and traditions.

Do we not owe it to our personal Savior, Jesus Christ, to individually search for the truth regarding *WHY* He was born? Christmas is a *man-made* holiday with ancient origins rooted firmly in very un-Christian practices (Jeremiah 10:2-4). It is challenging to evaluate the reasons why mankind has adopted and embraced certain practices, *which are not biblical*, and thus transformed them into heart-held traditions.

Do we dare to be a Daniel? Do we dare stand, alone if need be, for Jesus Christ? He alone died for us. As humans, we do not want to be different. We want to be like everyone else. To "fit-in" with the crowd and be accepted for our un-individuality. It's hard to go against the majority. Christ wasn't accepted when He walked this earth and as Christians we are not always going to be accepted. The servant is not above the master.

Regardless of man's good intentions, God says there is a way that seems right to a man but the end thereof is death (Proverbs 14:12). God's word instructs us how to worship Him. He has commanded us not to add or take away from His word (Deuteronomy 12:32, Revelation 22:18-19). Christ Himself stated, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men?" (Mark 7:7).

Remember Daniel, remember how

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The Quest For Eternal Life

Parts 3 & 4

*A series by Charles Pope,
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Life after death is a gift from God! Hebrews 9:27 says, "It is appointed once for men to die." We are not going to get out of this world alive! Death is a part of the plan for mankind, designed by God. What about people who do not believe in God and are killed by time and chance? What is their fate? The Bible reveals a master plan that God has designed to cover all human beings who are begotten or draw the breath of life. The master plan is somewhat hidden from us through the writings of the Bible. Jesus said to His disciples, "The prophets of old have desired to know what I have revealed to you." The fulfillment of the master plan will happen sometime in the future! Some of the events of the master plan have already occurred. These are identifiable as we look to history and compare what the writings of the prophets say, and the historical events that have been documented down through time. One of the main events was the first coming of the Messiah. This event was foretold by the prophets and alluded to as far back in time as the writings of Genesis! King David, in

Psalms 22 & 23 described the pain and suffering of Christ, centuries before the event actually happened!

GOD CAN BE THE CIRCUMSTANCE

Circumstance is a condition or fact attending an event and having bearing on it as a determining factor causing intervention or change. Circumstance to the "believer" is the very power that created all we know and experience around us! God can change us from human to divine! From sons of men to sons of God! Romans 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Galatians 3:26, "You are the sons of God by faith in Christ." There it is! Right from the pages of your Bible! Remember what I said earlier? We can allow a special circumstance to influence our life, and that circumstance is recognition and belief in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 11:1 tells us Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things

not yet seen. Faith in Christ is absolute belief that He was the Creator of all things, (John 1:1 and 1:12) and that He has prepared the way for us to have life after death!

By time and chance, we became physical living human beings and we can choose to live and follow a way of life that will enable us to become Spirit Beings in the God family! God, in His infinite wisdom, gave great laws to protect us in this physical life. Mankind has learned how to work with physical laws such as gravity, inertia, and physics.

We call these things "nature" or "natural laws." God has also given us "spiritual laws" to help establish and govern both our physical and spiritual lives. Consider the following list of laws that are an outline of how to protect physical life and prepare the human spirit for a change to spiritual life eternal:

(1) Acknowledge the existence of only one God.

(2) God is not to be expressed in physical objects or images fashioned by mankind.

(3) God's name is Powerful-Holy-Reverent and not to be used in vain cursing.

(4) God created a specific, special day for mankind to cease from normal day to day activity and to rest, worship, and remember the mighty works of creation and the purpose of life. It is a day we should set apart from all other days and observe its passing of time with different activities and attitude.

(5) Have respect and honor for those who started your physical life.

(6) Do not commit the act of murder.

(7) Do not practice acts of infidelity toward the marriage covenant.

(8) Do not steal.

(9) Do not lie.

(10) Do not wish for things other people have to the degree of it dominating all of your thoughts.

These are basic laws for an established lifestyle in the duration of this physical life to prepare us for the spiritual life after death. Don't kid yourself about this life and how you live it. What you do with your life, and how much Godly character you produce is vital to any future existence! God's

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judgement is crucial in your life! God accepts what you do now. It is important that we worship God in God's way. This is the lesson of the Old Testament worship of God which has been elevated to a spiritual level through Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

GOD'S TEXTBOOK FOR MANKIND

It is important to recognize the physical and spiritual plans for the life we live. God has left us instructions and choices to make. The Bible is God's great textbook for life. The 10 Commandments found in the writings of the Old Testament are God's laws. Sometimes well meaning teachers leave the impression that these laws were the laws of Moses. A careful personal study of Exodus 20 will help you to see these were God's Commandments given to Moses to establish an outline for moral integrity for mankind. The 10 Commandments give us the stable outline of influence to preserve both physical and spiritual relationships with both God and

mankind. God's annual Holy Days mentioned in Leviticus 23 teach us a deeper spiritual influence that guides us in the specific plan God has designed for all of mankind.

The Bible has educational power. It broadens the vision, strengthens the mind, and elevates the thoughts. A knowledge of it's principles is the essential preparation to every calling. To the extent it is studied and it's teachings received, God's word gives strength of character, nobel ambition, keen perception, and sound judgement. Of all the books ever written, none contain lessons so instructive, precepts so pure, or promises so great as the Bible.

As a guide, the Bible is without rival. It gives a calm peace in believing, and a firm hope for the future. It contains ancient answers for the modern questions of life. It will inspire a life of purity, patience, and well doing that helps you to overcome the problems of life. **The Bible teaches the value of life, by revealing the price that was paid to redeem it.** The Bible makes known the only antidote for sin, and presents the only code of morals ever given by God. It tells of the future and how to prepare to meet it.

As a teaching tool, the Bible instructs us to uphold what is right. The historic, prophetic, writings and testimonies of those who lived these lessons sustain the heart in adversity and affliction. It lights up the darkness and mystery of death, and points to a life unending. No other book can answer the questions of the mind or satisfy the longings of the heart as does the Bible. Its spiritual content adapts to every age and condition of life, and is full of that knowledge which enlightens the mind and satisfies the soul. The Bible itself reveals its spiritual author, the living God! Received

by faith, this book has the power to transform our lives!

As a guide book for the future, there are rules for interpretation and study. These rules are found within the book itself. Statements such as; *"line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little there a little"* are indications that the Bible is not just a *"sit down to read book."* It requires preparation of the heart and attitude, and a patient, careful comparison of its information. It contains a combination of History, Prophecy, and Philosophy which is the fabric of information that can only be understood when woven together with the Spirit of God.

This "textbook for mankind" is where the river of the Spirit of God flows! It should be your main reference to prove all of what you see and hear about God.

History will verify that your Bible has been protected from evil attacks on its credibility. It is a powerful book that requires an

“What you do with your life, and how much Godly character you produce is vital to any future existence! God's judgement is crucial in your life!”

attitude of open honesty about ourselves and what we are seeking to know about God. The only other book I recommend to use along with the Bible, is a Greek and Hebrew concordance. Bible commentaries are just another man's opinion.

Study your own Bible. Trust God to help you see what you need to understand about His words of life and form your own opinion about what this life is about and where it is going. •

Keeping God's Commandments

By J. Didymus Pope,
Albuquerque, New Mexico

As one who professes the Lord Jesus Christ as well as the Christian's obligation to obey God, I am often confronted by various questions. For example:

"What do you mean you observe the 10 Commandments? Isn't that just Old Testament? "Do you observe ALL 10?"

Living a life *enriched* by the choice to observe God's Commandments (*Deuteronomy 30:16*), I feel the question one should ask is *"Do you **break** a commandment now and then?"* I would admit that *"Yes I do," for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23 KJV throughout)*. But from what I know about sin, since *sin is the transgression of God's Law (1 John 3:4)*, I can also say that I do not practice sin.

In returning to the question pertaining to their observance of God's Commandments, many professing believers of Christ reply, *"Well no, we can't keep the 10 Commandments."*

"Why not?" I ask. *"Are God The Father, The Lord Jesus Christ, and THEIR Commandments unfair? Have God's Commandments been set-*

aside?" Let's turn to the Gospel of John:

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:9-14).

Did you notice the last sentence? Were just the 12 disciples to be the only friends of Jesus? Do God The Father and Jesus Christ have other friends? Of course they do. Let's look at the book of James concerning Abraham:

"Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:22-24).

Continuing with our study, let's turn our attention to the

Book of Revelation. There are 2 factors which decide who gains entrance into New Jerusalem, *The Holy City*, of Revelation 21:10. Let's see what qualifies us as believers once we have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior:

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17).

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

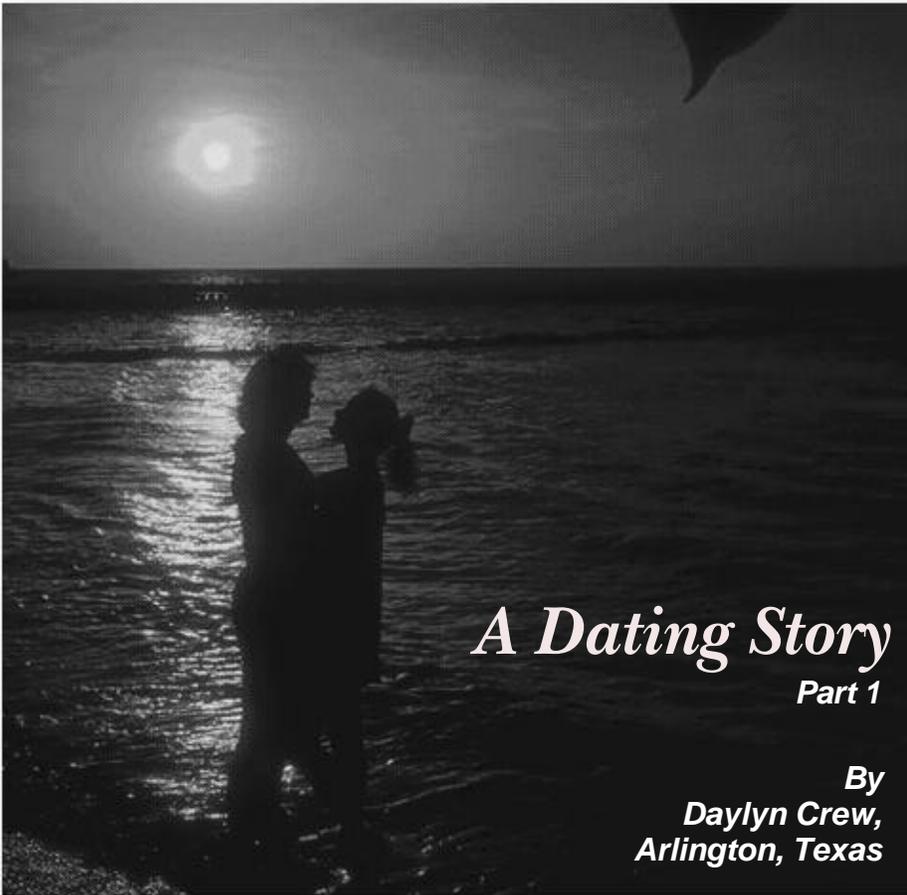
Here are 3 witnesses to the fact that we as Christians, MUST keep the 10 Commandments!

The only being that can enter the Holy City, that was once flesh and blood, is a Christian. And to remain in the Book of Life we must keep God's Commandments AND have the Testimony of Jesus Christ our Lord. No wonder Matthew quoted Jesus in chapter 7 verses 21-24 of his gospel:

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (or lawlessness)."

As Christians we have no alternative other than to keep The 10 Commandments.

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of



A Dating Story Part 1

By
Daylyn Crew,
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each detail. His kiss is both tender and passionate, then his words gentle and low, "I've never met anyone quite like you." He waits until she is safely inside and the deadbolt secure.

For Kristen the shutting of the door brings a moment's hesitation, as she wonders whether it was a kiss goodnight or a kiss goodbye. She shuts her eyes for a split second and a prayer slips out almost from her subconscious, "Father, whatever happens, make me strong." When she opens her eyes she is surprised as a tear slides silently down her cheek.

Outside the quiet aloneness seems to engulf Dave, and his footsteps sound loud and hollow as he walks through the street light's cold circle of light to his empty car.

(To Be Continued)

Most of the male eyes follow her as she moves with an easy grace across the restaurant and to the door Dave now holds open. Minutes later they stand alone outside her apartment. She flips back her long dark hair in that gesture that always devastates him, and fixes him earnestly with her brown eyes sparkling like defiant fourth of July fireworks.

"No, Dave, I'm not going to change my mind! It's just not what I am or what I stand for."

He leans forward and with his fingertip begins to gently trace the outline of her cheek up to her earlobe. An inch from her ear he whispers, "You miss out on a lot."

She steps backward to look fully into his blue eyes, determined not to allow his handsome face to influence her words, "Yes, when my friend is late and she's wondering whether

her birth control failed, I miss out on that. And I don't have to worry who's the one in 50 carrying the AIDS virus." She was smiling, friendly, but firm and clear as a faceted diamond. "Best of all, when I look in the mirror, I really like myself."

"So, you're still a virgin?" The tone of his voice is somewhere between curiosity and disbelief.

"Whether I'm a virgin or whether I've made a choice for celibacy, really is my business. What matters is that it's a firm decision before God, and with His help I'll keep my promise." It is simply stated yet with rock solid conviction.

"You're different, Kristen, you're really unique." His eyes move slowly over every detail of her face, the tilt of her nose, the warmth of her smile, the sheen of her hair. He tries to memorize

From the Author of:

A Dating Story

Movies and TV are teaching our young men and women how to seduce and be seduced as they are swept along in a wave of evil that poses as "good" and "normal." Fiction is an apt teacher and our youth are being taught along with the rest of the nation that sex is a usual part of dating. It is time we did something to show and teach **this is not God's way** and is not a way that produces happiness.

Note the popularity of "E.R." and "Melrose Place." Both show the lives of people in an ongoing romantic story. They teach the viewpoint of sexual immorality quite well. Here is the other side . . . God's side.

Daylyn Crew

Psalm 77:12-19 "I will meditate also of all Thy work, and talk of Thy doings."

Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown (Jonah 3:4). These were the chilling words spoken by the prophet Jonah to the people of Nineveh. What was their response? They repented and were saved, they turned their lives around and walked in righteousness. God repented of the evil and spared their lives. Would He do the same for us?

What would our reaction be I wonder, if a man walked into town and cried with a loud voice "Yet forty days and America will be overthrown"?

There has been such a message and there is such a man. That man is Isaiah. Although long since dead, his message of warning is written in every Bible in every home, church, Town Hall, state legislature, even in the Congress and Supreme Court of the United States and also in the Oval Office. What was this man's warning to us?

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.... How is the faithful city (or nation) become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water: Thy princes (or leaders) are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease

me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies" (Isaiah 1:4,21-24).

If we, being one of the most blessed nations on the earth, fail to repent from our personal and national sins, how can we stand against our creator God in the day of judgement? Once righteousness lodged in our capital, once judgement ruled in our hearts, but now we have become a harlot. We do not discern between right and wrong. We do not seek the truth but rather an amicable solution to embarrassing situations. Our princes or leaders have failed to maintain our own God given laws. We elected them, and what does that say about us? Let us all dust off those Bibles, and remind ourselves of who we are and how we should be living. Let us not ignore the message Isaiah brings us. Let us choose life as the people of Nineveh did. They turned to the source, to the Fountain of Life. The prophet Joel shows us the answers to our modern dilemmas and questions. We should not ignore his message but rather apply his ancient answers.

"Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him... Let the priests, the

ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen" (Joel 2:12-14,17-19).

Until next time meditate also of all His work and talk of His doings.

FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

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