

# The Messenger

A Publication of Community Bible Fellowship

November 2019



You *crown* the  
year with bountiful  
*harvest*;  
even the  
hard pathways  
*overflow*  
with  
*abundance*.

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Psalms 65:11

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Friends,

On November 11th our nation will celebrate Veterans Day. I thought it would be appropriate to share the history of this holiday and to offer an example of heroism displayed by a chaplain during World War II.

Many people in the United States confuse Memorial Day with Veterans Day. Memorial Day is a holiday for remembering those who have lost their lives while serving in the Armed Forces. Veterans Day is a holiday for celebrating the service of all those who are serving or have served in the Armed Forces of the United States. Veterans Day was first instituted by President Woodrow Wilson at the end of World War I. Initially it was known as Armistice Day to commemorate the armistice signed at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918. Despite the fact that the war did not officially end until the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, most nations commemorate the ending of the War on November 11th each year. In the United States, it became a federal holiday in 1938 with its name and purpose changing in 1954. With the designation as "Veterans Day," the holiday came to represent a day of honoring all men and women who have served in the Armed Forces.

Many veterans have served without being placed in extreme danger. Others have been wounded or lost their lives. As we pause on November 11th to say a prayer for those who are serving or have served in the military, let us also remember to thank our veterans for their willingness to serve. As I reflected on the number of veterans currently living in the U.S. (21,999,000), I thought about John 15:13. In this verse, we find Jesus saying the following to His disciples: **"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."** Jesus calls us to love one another so much so that we would be willing to sacrifice

ourselves. While some might suggest that Jesus was making use of hyperbole, Christians understand the command to love without counting the cost.

Considering Jesus' explanation of love, I want to share a story about a Navy chaplain who served during World War II. Reverend George S. Rentz was a Presbyterian minister who served as a chaplain in World War I and II. During the Battle of Makassar Strait in 1942, the USS Houston, on which Reverend Rentz was serving, was sunk by the Japanese. The following account is taken from an article entitled 12 Heroic U.S. Military Chaplains found on the internet: "Hanging onto an overcrowded piece of floating material, Rentz tried to relinquish his life jacket to a younger sailor, but no one wanted to take it. He ordered Seaman First Class Walter L. Beeson to take the life jacket, then Rentz prayed and quietly abandoned the float and disappeared before the other men knew what he was doing. He was one year away from retirement. Rentz was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross, and the frigate USS Rentz was named in his honor."

On November 11th, let us not only remember our nation's veterans and their willingness to be placed in harm's way for their fellow countrymen, but let us also remember Jesus' command to love others unconditionally. We may not have to give up our chance of survival for another, but in fact, we will not be able to avoid the plight of those in need constantly before us. May God enable us and strengthen us to remember that we are not our own.

In His grip,

Pastor Paul Karsten



### THE MAKINGS OF A CONSPIRACY

Over a decade ago, a few pastors were lamenting how they'd come to the end of an Advent season exhausted and sensing they'd missed it – the awe-inducing, soul-satisfying mystery of the incarnation.

For many of us, we drown in a sea of financial debt and endless lists of gifts to buy. We struggle to find the connection between our Christmas to-do lists and the story of Jesus' birth.

An overwhelming stress has overtaken worship and celebration.

The time of year when focusing on Christ should be the easiest is often the hardest. Somehow, this has become the new normal.

So, in 2006, three pastors decided to try something different. They called it the Advent Conspiracy movement and came up with four tenets—Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, Love All—to guide themselves, their families and congregations through the Christmas season.



#### WORSHIP FULLY

Nearly every character in the Christmas story that encountered our King responded in the same way: worship. Let's make the conscious effort to reorient our hearts toward Christ. Christmas began with worship; may it end with worship.



#### SPEND LESS

In our hearts, we know mindless consumption is not the way to celebrate Jesus. But spending less does not mean spending nothing. Rather we will thoughtfully evaluate what companies and causes we support through our purchases.



#### GIVE MORE

The best gifts celebrate a relationship, and most often they require our time and energy. Relational giving means that we think about the other person—who they are and what they care about. We focus more on giving our undivided presence and less on a pile of presents under the tree.



#### LOVE ALL

Christmas is a chance to move closer to those in crisis. We will love others as Jesus has loved us. The poor and hurting of our world can be reached by God through the way we choose to celebrate Christmas.

The movement started small—just a handful of churches who would try this experiment and make the Advent story personal again. That first Christmas they got creative, changed their traditions and ended up raising enough money for a water-well in West Africa.

The news spread quickly, a book was written, videos were created, and along the way a revolution was born.

### TODAY

Over the last decade, thousands of churches have celebrated with more relational traditions, partnered with more organizations and channeled more resources to the poor, marginalized and forgotten.

Advent Conspiracy is about the entire body of Christ at work in the world. As we worship fully, spend less, give more and love all, something begins to happen that is greater than any single person, church or denomination. As the Church, we are telling the story of Jesus to the watching world.

Our prayer is that more churches join together to live out the story of Jesus' sacrificial love. God is not finished with our world, and He is inviting us deeper into the Christmas story.

To begin this Advent season, we will start a 4-part series on the Advent Conspiracy. Let's take back Christmas for what it is meant to be. We pray that you choose to conspire with us.



## *The Mountain Peaks of Prophecy*

There are some Old Testament prophecies that are difficult to understand because they contain, within one prophecy, information relevant to both comings of Christ. The Old Testament prophets did not see the long church age separating the two comings. More specifically, they did not see the two comings with clear understanding. In 1 Corinthians 2:9 Paul quoted Isaiah, who admitted he did not understand all that God had in store for mankind. Then Paul added, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (verse 10 KJV). Thus, New Testament prophecies often clarify the end-time prophecies of the Old Testament. And that is why they should be studied together.

The fact that the two comings of Messiah were inadvertently perceived as one event explained why so many Jews did not accept Jesus as their Messiah. They took Jesus' promises to overcome the world (promises that apply to His second coming) and applied those promises to His first coming. Thus, the major reason many people reject Jesus was not because He was not the most incredible miracle worker ever or the greatest teacher ever. It was because He had not thrown off the shackles of the Roman dictators. They wanted Him to free Israel yet did not realize the prophecies related to His future Kingdom would be fulfilled at His second coming, and not His first. He came instead to suffer for their sins, die on the cross, and rise again—without which there would be no forgiveness of sin or eternal life. For example, Isaiah wrote,

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore (Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV).

Isaiah did not realize two separate comings were described in those words. We, who live in the church age, have the benefit of looking back and seeing that some prophecies were fulfilled in Christ's first coming, and others won't be fulfilled until His second coming

If we see the key prophecies of Jesus' two comings as mountain tops and other events like the church age and the tribulation as valleys, then much of what we read in Bible prophecy becomes clearer.

Friends,

This month as I collected my thoughts on end-times prophecy, I spent a considerable amount of time reviewing last month's article. WOW! That really was a ton of information. If you made it through or even attempted to wrap your head around all that information, I applaud you. Each one of the covenants could have easily been covered in their own article. I think our greatest hope comes from the realization that it is in and through Christ alone that we get to experience "our confidence" in the blessed hope. Meaning, that God has bound Himself to keep the promises He made to the nation of Israel. Because of His trustworthiness, we are confident that He will bring these things to pass. When we say YES! to the free gift of salvation, we have something that is nothing less than glorious to look forward to, eternity with Jesus.

As I shared last month, let me sound like a broken record and remind you that as believers it's important for us to remember that we are called to "look" for the signs indicating the events of the end-times. However, we must remember that as professing believers in Jesus Christ we are called to the work of the Kingdom by following the command of Jesus given in Matthew 28. We are to GO! and make disciples of all nations. The purpose in sharing this article is to promote healthy discussion and give insight into an otherwise "difficult" topic to approach. Let's also remember that choosing to hold to any of the various views on end-times prophecy is not a salvation issue.

Lastly, my desire is that you seek the Lord in prayer prior to and during this study. Ask him to reveal His purpose for sharing this information with us. Have your Bible available and thoroughly explore scripture as you read, and may God bless you as you draw near to Him.

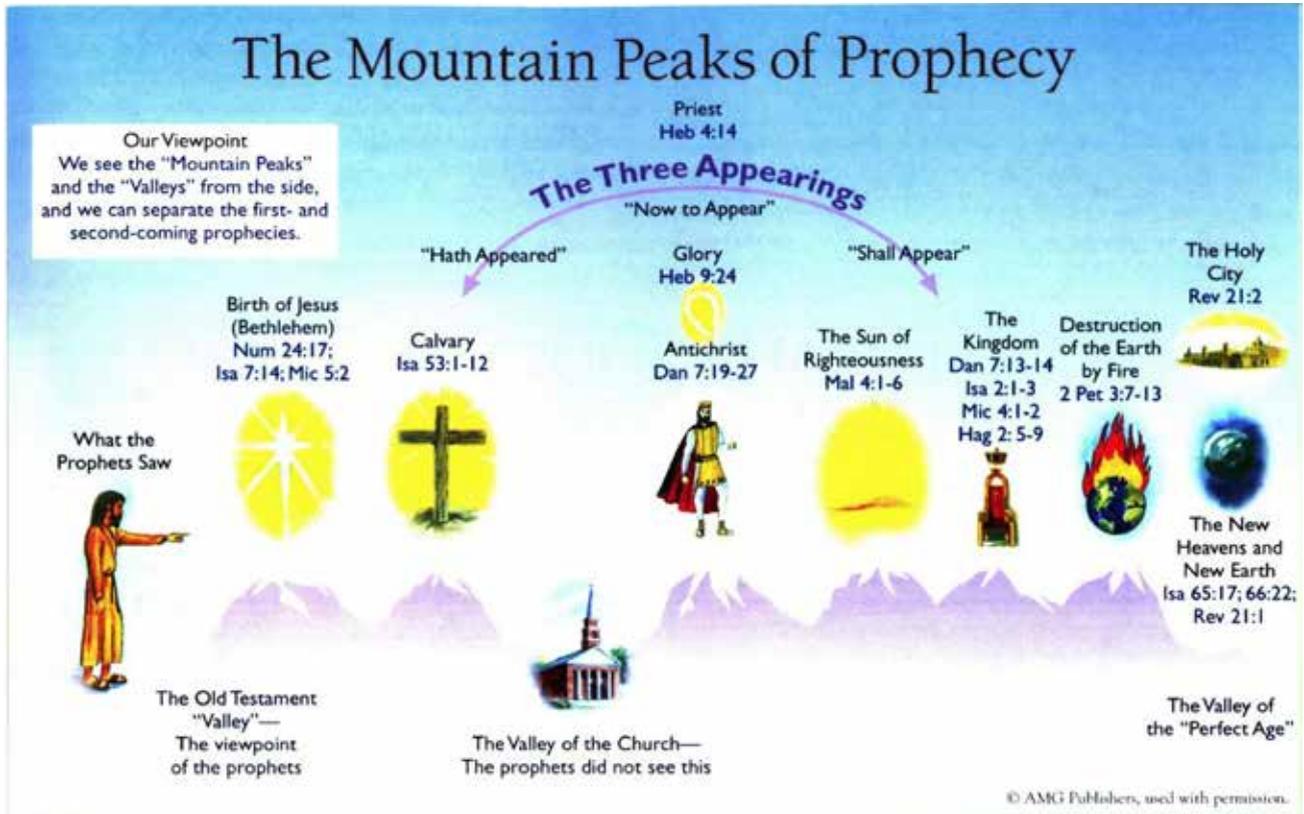
In His grip,

Pastor Paul Karsten

The importance of a chart locating the mountain tops of prophecy in history is made clear in a classic book written by Clarence Larkin:

...the Prophet saw in a Direct Line along the "Peaks of Prophecy" and did not see the "Valley of the Church" in between. Our viewpoint is from the side. We face the

"Valley" from the "First Advent" (the cross) to our left, and the "Second Advent" (the crown) to our right. All we have to do is separate the prophecies of the "First Advent" from the prophetic references to Christ in the Old Testament and apply the balance to his "Second Advent." This simplifies the study of prophecy.



Isaiah's prophecies focused mainly on the Messiah and Israel. Jeremiah proclaimed Israel's return to their own land. Ezekiel spoke of the restoration of Israel to their own land as well as the Millennial land, the restored Temple, and the form of worship in that time. Daniel prophesied about the Gentiles and their final great leader, the Antichrist. Zechariah was most concerned about the events that will take place at the second coming of Christ:

- Antichrist (the idol shepherd)—Zechariah 11:15-17
- Armageddon—Zechariah 14:1-3
- Conversion of Israel—Zechariah 12:9-14
- Christ's return to Olivet—Zechariah 14:4-11
- Old age in Jerusalem—Zechariah 8:3-8
- Feast of Tabernacles—Zechariah 14:16-21

Notice that Zechariah does not see these events in their chronological order. All the major prophets and nine of the minor prophets emphasized the kinship of Christ in the prophecy. That's what confused religious leaders of Christ's day. But today, in hindsight, we can separate the prophecies of the first coming from those of the second coming. This is appreciated most when you study the prophecy in light of the above chart. This understanding will help you to become a "a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15 ESV) about the prophetic future.



## ***Three Kinds of Giving***

by Robert N. Rodenmayer

There are three kinds of giving:

GRUDGE-GIVING, DUTY-GIVING and THANKS-GIVING.

Grudge-giving says, "I have to." Duty-giving says, "I ought to."

Thanks-giving says, "I want to." The latter comes from a full heart.

Thanksgiving is an open gate into the **love of God**.





# GRATITUDE game

Start a fun tradition by playing this game on Thanksgiving.



## What you need:

- M&M's or other colored candies
- A bowl
- The list below (adapt the colors, as needed)

**Red:** a need God has provided for

**Orange:** a gift you've received

**Yellow:** something you've recently learned

**Green:** something in nature

**Blue:** a special memory

**Brown:** someone you love

## What you do:

1. One at a time, people pick a candy and share what they're thankful for (according to the color).
2. Pass the bowl around and continue reflecting on God's goodness until all the candy is gone!



## November Birthdays & Anniversaries

- |                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 11/5 Aiden Dowd     | 11/08 Shaila Hudson          |
| 11/6 Jenny Stropes  | 11/16 Andrew & Shaila Hudson |
| 11/6 Jeff Stracner  | 11/17 Ray Norton             |
| 11/7 Matt Ewing     | 11/23 Kelsey Weir            |
| 11/8 Jordan Frieden |                              |

## Mark Your Calendar

- 11/06, Wed | Adult Bible Study w/Bob Hoffman | 7 PM | Activity Room  
 11/07, Thurs | Prayer Warrior Meeting | 6:30 PM | Activity Room  
 11/09, Sat | Family Movie Night | 6 – 8:30 PM | Chapel  
 11/10, Sun | Annual Congregational Meeting | 11:30 AM | Sanctuary  
 11/13, Wed | Adult Bible Study w/Bob Hoffman | 7 PM | Activity Room  
 11/14, Thurs | Prayer Warrior Meeting | 6:30 PM | Activity Room  
 11/20, Wed | Adult Bible Study w/Bob Hoffman | 7 PM | Activity Room  
 11/21, Thurs | Prayer Warrior Meeting | 6:30 PM | Activity Room  
 11/23, Sat | Blood Drive | 7 – 10:30 AM | Chapel

## CBF Financial Report – September:

	Monthly	Year to Date
Total Income	\$11,030.94	\$120,997.19
Total Expenses	\$8,116.54	\$110,092.91
Net Operating Income	\$2,914.40	\$10,904.28



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