

# STRAIGHTWAY

"And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" [Mark 1:18].

## CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

The Witness Outreach of Foundations Bible College  
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## CHRISTMAS SEPARATIONS

by Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, Founder & President  
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Historic Christmas has never been popular and has never been historically clear to the world. The very first Christmas was heavily freighted with rejection, hatred, and misunderstanding by many people. Down through the centuries this holy birthday has been held with pagan rites and calendar inaccuracies and a host of other problems. There were early delays of its remembrances and later sacrileges proposed and observed. Pagan meanings crept in with full force and finally the ongoing, institutional Western church deliberately and volitionally, at the end of the sixth century, as medievalist Norman Cantor tells the story, made a momentous decision: it decided to tolerate magic, fertility cults, and other manifestations of pagan spirituality, thus incorporating some key elements

of folk religion into the Christian scheme of things. Cantor contends, in these realities, that it was done for nothing less than the very survival of Christianity as a religious entity in the earth.

Of course, in our own hearts, as Bible-believing Christians, we are deeply grieved by Cantor's report of such a price paid as the "survival" was hopefully purchased.

This magnifies, again and again, the precious importance of the Protestant Reformation in its legitimate protest against accommodations like this. We must conclude that we certainly are not preserving Christianity when we compromise with the superstitions of folk religion.

All of these things dilute the power and truth of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus in history. Of course, every serious student

knows these things to be true. Undoubtedly, this grave inculcation was added to the burden of the church from within the casuistry of the church itself rather than an actual belief in the urgency of popular religion and folk magic as such.

### **What Are We to Do With Christmas?**

The urgency of the present hour in both Church History and Biblical Prophecy has brought many of us to wonder what shall we indeed do with Christmas now? This is a valid question at this point in history, and especially because of the present conflict about the relationship between popular religion and the historic gospel. I know some Christian brothers who have already given up the Christmas celebration, as far as a commemorative birthday to keep. That is not my position, but I do understand their problem, and have for many years. However, I could no more give it up than I would want to give up any other birthday of any other friend I know. In fact, I would rather give up any other birthday than the one dedicated to the Lord Jesus' coming into the world. I care not for any calendar mistakes

involved or any present commercialism of the day itself. I keep the Lord's Day Sabbath although it is everywhere desecrated, and the very same calendar problems that are involved in the Christmas problem are also involved in the Lord's Day calendar problem as far as the exact designation of Sunday is concerned. All of the names of the days of the week have been traced back to pagan signs of the zodiac and their gods.

The fallacy of the Seventh Day Adventists is seen in their claim of tracing the Sabbath back, historically, and then magnifying their own findings of the exact day as a stipulation in their cult-Christianity concepts. We do not take the position of the S.D.A. It is impossible to trace with absolute accuracy the Sabbath or Sunday as a day either to the first Sabbath after Creation, or the first Sunday after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The calendar is a fragile, damaged fact. If we ever start trying to solve the calendar problems in Christianity, it may finally cause us to doubt historic Christianity itself altogether. It was not God that gave us the modern calendar; it was popes and peoples.

Adventists keep Christmas because of their own attestation of the calendar; we keep it because of the revealed word in the Holy Scriptures which attest His glorious, supernatural, Virgin Born Birth, and His resurrection on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week. We follow not the exactness of the calendar date, but rather the example of the angels, the shepherds, the Wise Men, as well as Joseph and Mary. They gave Him gifts; that is why we want to give gifts—because Jesus, God's Gift to the world, is in our hearts and we want to follow Him as a servant in

## **STRAIGHTWAY**

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example and as His servant through example. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). The gift may be large or small; it does not matter. I am also aware that some of our pious and scholarly men of the past had different opinions than we have, and yet we respect them. However, I quote not men of the past; I quote a higher authority. Paul made our position clear by his revealed command: "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). It is our understanding that the exact Christmas Day Question is a doubtful thing and must be settled by personal faith, not blind obedience to historical evidences of past divines. In spite of scholarship, they were human, too, and would be the first to acknowledge it. Their conclusions were based upon information outside the Bible itself. Sometimes it is possible for a Christian to be misguided by his own human regard for a human "divine," and write his own personal convictions as if he discovered such a conclusion first. Only Jesus deserves such honors. No other book should be respected equal or above the Bible. Along with our respectful imitation of other Christians, we must be sure that we have not taken on a form that is not natural and native to our own personality but is actually imitating their personality. Sincere and natural Christianity is hard to come by because of the good religious manner which we have made for ourselves.

We return to the first sentence of this article: The commemoration of Christmas Day has never been popular or clear in church history. Too much has damaged it to say nothing

of the fact that every genuine remembrance of our Lord Jesus should be acceptable to the historicity of historical men since fallen Adam in time, space, and history.

We are presently living in the time of the most dangerous meaning of Christmas the years have brought—we are living in the time of the apostasy in the name of Christianity. Yet, I, personally, must believe in Christmas, 1998, in spite of every obstacle. If I were against Christmas, 1998, it would mean that I would have to write a protest against every Christmas Card I might receive with a blessed message of His birth. I would also need to cancel out every Christmas Carol in my musical library or reject, in the place that I worship, every reference to any respect for Christmas. I would have to endeavor to explain to every child of my rejection of Christmas without rejecting the Christ to that child. I fear I might offend "one of the least of them," at least in spirit if not understanding. Finally, in the midst of the twentieth century's greatest damage to Christmas, by both its ecumenical and commercial celebration, to say nothing of the apostasy against Christianity, I am afraid I would be destroying at least one ounce of pure, Biblical evidence and a person's faith in God's wondrous grace. I am encouraged to protect all evidence that underlines faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not believe it is possible for man to damage a matter as great as the truth of the birth of the Lord Jesus and not hurt the Father in some way. Personally, I know that if I were to do that it would affect my Christian life and soul. However, I am aware of the fact that there might be someone who would truly believe he was

rendering service to God to remove Christmas Day from history. I can remember, as a child, this question coming up in the churches my dear father planted and pastored. It was a divisive question and often brought confusion to the novice who was still unstable in his soul.

However, I do not want to run the risk, myself, of removing Christmas in case I am wrong. I do not believe that we needed to have an explicit announcement in the New Testament to keep Christmas commemorations in history; I simply believe that if we were not to keep it, there would have been a positive prohibition clearly stated—such as is stated against idolatry and paganism. It is not in my spirit to condemn anyone who believes they are doing something to the glory of Christ; and I am indeed aware, back in Christian history, of those who either believed Christmas to be a Roman Catholic and pagan holiday, or that the calendar failed, or that there was no record of early Christians' keeping it. However, we need to deal with the matter of not throwing out the Babe of Bethlehem in the bathwater of our contemporary times, and I am constrained in my own heart to protect the privilege of Christmas Day. I thank God for every time I have heard "O Little Town of Bethlehem," rising above the din of a shopping mall. Even Martin Luther tells the story of the glistening tree in the snow reflecting the lights nearby on Christmas Eve, which was a blessing to him. This simply, as a symbol, strengthens our thoughts in the glory of the Cross of Calvary's Tree at His birth. If we reject commemorations of Jesus' birthday, will we tell everyone we have given up the Calendar Christmas? or, just family and our

church? Is this not deception to the world and others? How will we treat Christmas cards received or Christ-mas greetings given to us from all others? How sad if we only tell our family and our children and our friends who do love Jesus.

### **Who First Commemorated Christmas?**

There is only a remnant recorded in the Word of God that witnessed the first Christmas. Joseph, Mary, Zacharias, and Elizabeth were prepared for the glorious day. The Holy Spirit dared to use them in the historical incarnation. The shepherds came as a result of the angelic messages urging them to go in haste to see the Babe in the manger, a kind of place shepherds were acquainted with in their own ordinary occupation. Simeon and Anna recognized the extraordinary in the ordinary appearance of the baby. The Wise Men arrived some time later in a different place, evidently, with the appearance of a special star indicative to their native wisdom as a catalyst for travel. Only after they reached Bethlehem did the special star they had seen in the East reappear, now in the sky of the Middle East. They brought gifts which probably assisted Joseph and Mary, financially, in their flight to Egypt and back to Nazareth.

But a divine Christmas separation was made at Herod's House, distinct from the chief priests, who declared to Herod the prophecy and the place of the birth of Messiah—the Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth and Bethlehem (first the conception of Jesus' Body at Nazareth, and then His actual birth at Bethlehem). Herod sought out the destruction of this Babe in his decree of the slaughter of

the infants. The history-writing powers are few and rare in their accounts of the fact other than the modest records of Josephus; the Roman historian Tacitus, in his description of the fire in Rome; as well as Suetonius, possibly; and it is believed that "Jesus" is mentioned in the Jerusalem Talmud. These records are small in comparison to the greatness of such a birth. Such calendars simply do not include all things about Jesus. They did not keep Christmas Day. Jesus was not born to fame and popularity, nor did He ever find that in His earthly life. Nazareth was against Him, and the Crisis of Capernaum in the feeding of the 5,000 saw another great decline in what little fame He had to that point. Each day after Capernaum there came increased anger and betrayal against Him. Finally, after the raising of Lazarus from the dead, they killed the Christ of Glory. Only a remnant, comparatively speaking, recognized Him.

### **The Unpretentious Incarnation of Jesus**

Many other forces were against that first Christmas. Because of the selection of the unpretentious Manger and the will of the Father in the incarnation of His Son, the news media and the serious historians knew not the back roads of the lowly people. Multitudes did not keep the first Christmas. Of course, Satan and sin consorted against the proclamation, and therefore the Lord Jesus became "poor" in all the avenues of public and notable life and it was easy to ignore Him publicly. He became poor that we may be rich in all spiritual blessings in Him.

However, that was all in the will of the Father. His Son would never

personally own the things of an earthly life, but would quietly make acquisition and requisition of the manger, the grain from the corn-wheat field, the upper room, the ass, and even another's cross upon which to die as well as another's tomb in which to be buried. Jesus very seldom acknowledged His deity and Messiahship. The reason for this often silence was not a denial of His deity at all. More often an individual had to make inquiry of these matters before Jesus would confirm or reveal Himself to man or woman. The individual soul must reveal itself to the Christ, often, before the Christ will reveal Himself to that soul. Modern man has taken this fact as an occasion to deny that Jesus ever confessed to being the very Son of God. This indicates that the people did not understand the actions of Jesus rather than that they did not understand His own claim of deity. We are told that some four million Jews resided in Palestine at that time in His earthly life and that over 260,000 lambs were slain in some kind of sacrifice at His last passover, but very few, relatively speaking, understood the first Christmas Day Epiphany.

### **Neo-Evangelicals vs. Fundamentalists of Our Day**

This historic Christianity of the early Epiphany no longer prevails in our public world. Instead of historic Christianity, there is a new definition proclaimed by the Neo-Evangelicals, who have much in common with Roman Catholics in our time when it comes to dealing with popular religion. Both should be rightfully criticized for making too easy accommodations with popular religious culture, and that is another reason

why this author is a separatist fundamentalist. In our time we need to pay closer attention to this fact than we are doing even in some persons and parts of fundamentalism. It is this author's concerned opinion that the "ism" is swallowing up the "ists" and the "als" in the present movement of fundamentalism itself.

When the movement of Fundamentalism commenced, there was neither the time nor the precognition to write in advance the far-reaching rules and regulations needed concerning how we would do in all the matters of separation and denominational distinctives for the future. These early, rugged individuals simply rolled up their sleeves and took a stand against horrific threats, odds, and battles with the liberals who had compromised in the pulpits of churches that had been built by men and monies of those who loved God and His Word. Someone has rightly said that apostates do not build churches; they simply take over the conservative churches with their subtle, compromising liberalism. That is, to a great degree, true.

### **The Apostasy of Our Time**

It was only after that first successful response in the birth of fundamentalists that the question arose whether scriptural separation was really to be taught and practiced or not. Possibly the question is appropriate in some regards, but nevertheless scriptural separation must be practiced. What do you do when you are defrocked from the seminary and pulpit? Wallow in the determination that you will not draw a line of separation in order to keep union with a false unity? Scriptural separation came with the territory of

taking a stand against the liberal apostasy. Otherwise, there was to be no battle for truth. However, the definition of separation must be kept clear: first, there is a separation *unto* the Lord Jesus Christ; and then, because of that, there must be a separation *from* the apostasy.

Now that the apostasy has moved into the more deceptive quarter- and half-way houses in the artistry of error because of the coming together of the same liberals with the charismatics and the neo-evangelicals and Roman Catholics, it has suddenly become a great discussion of doubt in matters concerning inspiration, infallibility, and the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures as well as the question of fellowship with apostates. Fundamentalism is presently in the process of creating another generation of fundamentalists who might seek a new presupposition concerning separation in their desire in their time of the choice of fellowship and increased tolerance. This will no doubt bring the fundamentalists into an unseparated fabric with the fellowship of the ecumenical movement as well. We are definitely seeing that a number of the younger fundamentalists are indeed seeking an increased fellowship with the charismatics and the neo-evangelicals; they believe this is necessary for peace and growth as well as the answer for loneliness. They are seeking this with an apparently honorable hope. However, the question remains: is it possible to fellowship any section of the ecumenical amalgamation and remain a historic fundamentalist?

### **More Degrees of Separation Are Being Ignored**

It is the firm conviction of this writer there are indications that in

another twenty years all degrees of separation hitherto between fundamentalists and the ecumenists will be removed. Separation has been in a sick position in recent years in fundamentalism, and will formally die by the time young fundamentalists have gained true leadership in the movement. It has become more and more obvious that the second and third degrees, etc., of reputed separation have already died, if they indeed ever lived. This has become so obvious that there remains only a fragmentary first-degree separation that could yet die. At this very point in time we have, in some instances, already contradicted our previous separatist *stance*. A *stance* is the position of the Christian heart concerning his need of an outward *stand* against the apostasy. These remarks are certainly not said of all present leaders in fundamentalism, but the change cannot be stopped by the older fundamentalists very much longer. This article is not written with any specific fundamentalist in mind; but there is a condition presently existing that cannot now be changed or diverted by any man. We have neglected too long the correction of important things in fundamentalism. Because of this, it is too late to deal with it. The dam is already breaking; the next generation will not repair it.

### **Degree Separation Was Not Practiced**

The first of two great matters in fundamentalism concerns degree-separation. It was never really practiced by the great majority of fundamentalists. The earlier honorable separations made in the John R. Rice matters of methodological evangelism and his definition of the

inspiration of the Holy Scriptures were lost in the renewal of identification with the Sword of the Lord Conferences. This was followed by the fear of dealing with the Jack Hyles allegations of immorality. Both of these two dear men were companions in their association with the Sword of the Lord movement. A number of fundamentalists, who spoke so loyally of second- and third-degree separations of the Jack Hyles fellowships, actually then became silent about him, and would indeed begin fellowshipping, in a variety of ways, with associations in the Sword of the Lord movement. No explanation of a legitimate change was given for what followed; they simply began to accept a basis of tolerance or silence. Neither was any repentance ever given to clarify why they changed. Also, discussions of tolerance commenced with the belief that a man who had been in the ministry for a certain number of years should be allowed to return to his ministry after adultery or fornication. These matters brought confusion to the younger brethren as well as cast shadows on God's Word (in the Pastoral Epistles) as the revealed character which should mark leaders.

### **The Problem of Church Music Was Never Solved**

During the very same years contemporary Christian music began to arise among fundamentalists. It was at first presented "as an alternative for our young people" to the proliferation as heard on radio and television in the aftermath of the birth of Rock and Roll. Our favorite musicians in fundamentalism began to change and speak with a different mouth. Confusion resulted. A few

voices did speak out during those days. By the mid-1970s the catalyst was past. Since the 1980s, and now for almost twenty years, musicians have come our way in fundamentalism, each with a hope of either becoming more contemporary or carving a niche somewhat towards separation without actually getting separated. I know of no subject among fundamentalists more passionately rendered than the reaction against the need and voice of scriptural separation in the matter of the music dispensed through persons claiming the musical birthright of fundamentalism. It is the personal conviction of this writer that the matter of separation in the field of music has been lost in fundamentalism. I trust that all who read this article will be most merciful with me. I am now 72 years old. My entire family has been very much involved in sacred music. My dear wife and I have left a large legacy to two sons and one daughter which I trust they will never betray. I have fallen on my face before Almighty God many, many times that I would always set forth a good spirit and hopefully a magnificent one. I entered into fundamentalism in its study and the use of fundamentalist speakers and their philosophy of music in the year of 1950. In 1969, a great catalyst came into my life which caused me to flee the pentecostal movement. I not only left dreams, visions, and voices, but also the music that had changed even more so, going deeper and deeper into the further developments of Stamps and Baxter as well as "the gospel song" form. And now, even the charismatic songs have also characterized many of our fundamental churches with a touch of the fundamentalist performer in spite of

the fact that in some quarters we still claim we do not fellowship Charismatics. Well, we do fellowship their composers and their music and their arrangements.

### **Fellowship Across Denominations Is Still Needed**

In an article that I presented in *Straightway*, June of 1984, I gave a statistic of about 218 individuals among the early fundamentalists born before 1900. Ninety-one were Baptists, 59 Presbyterians, 20 non-denominationalists, 15 Methodists, 11 Congregationalists, 7 Brethren, 6 Anglicans, 4 Lutherans, 3 Salvation Army, and 2 Missionary Alliance. These were taken from the writings of the times in which they individually identified themselves with the fundamentalist movement.

Early Fundamentalism transcended denominations, which denominations were not opted by their belief in separation. This united influence was urgently needed to set forth the cardinal teachings in the core truth of the fundamental Gospel of the Lord Jesus. I met, as a young man in my father's house, such friends among the fundamentalists of different denominations. Of course, we would be remiss if we did not set forth three of the most influential denominations as that of presbyterians, methodists, and baptists. But there were others. Most of those involved in the early days were identified denominationally; there were not many independent Bible churches then. However, after the battle had been fought and victory had come to the fundamentalists, independent churches had to be planted. Most fundamentalists had made an exodus and become a pilgrim in the earth. There was a



genuine separation made by the individual choices of each member in the denominational churches as more and more pulpits fell into the hands of the apostasy of pastors. This was also true of the professorial chairs in the seminaries.

A great fellowship of people gathered under the banner of fundamentalism as they fought against liberalism. The Holy Spirit did bond great fellowships together under fundamentalism. I could call the roll of those whose spirits were knit in great depths of Christian love for each other.

I believe this is one of the things which has been lost in these later years as competitions came in the question of how many did you baptize last year? or, how many attend your preaching? or, how are the finances growing? or, how many were in Sunday School last Sunday? The early churches of fundamentalism were started with few in number who had been stalwart in the battle for the historical Gospel.

Right now, in the middle of the days of entering a new century, we need a revival of the renewing of our love to each other as fundamentalists across denominational lines. We need to purposefully plan other fundamentalists of other denominations to preach in our pulpits. I am far too busy to be saying this, personally, for myself; but the principle is once again needed. Personally, I only know of two congresses on fundamentalism that bring in a regular array of fundamentalists across the denominational lines in America. Yet, there are more in number in other countries. Fundamentalism must once again transcend denominational tags if we are to see the Body of Christ among us. I thank

God for every presbyterian, methodist, baptist, and other church identified with fundamentalism in which I have had the delight to preach the Gospel across all my years. Evangelism is for sinners; but nothing takes the place of the fellowship and edification of the saints of God. Let everyone of us as fundamentalists pray for the complete restoration of all fundamentalists into the joy and victory of united brethren in the ongoing war against the neo-ecumenists of our time.

### **The Billy Graham Heresy is Still Alive Among Us**

One of the great proofs that should bond the battle in the hearts of all fundamentalists is that several generations of fundamentalists have watched and warred against a singular leader in the ongoing battle. He is the gauge of measuring whether we as fundamentalists have changed or not. For almost fifty solid years we have known the battle by the compromises and increasing heresies of Dr. Billy Graham. He continues to preach on the same circuit of crusades of thought since his present illness began, but more so. He has taken earlier positions to a further conclusion, but they are the same original thoughts. He has not changed. Some think he has changed his thoughts because of his illness. That is not a tenable position of his half-century ministry. He has never altered his methodology since the early 1950s when he changed his sponsorship to liberals in New York. He is the very same man with the very same message with the very same crusades producing the very same confusion among the true brethren and churches. He has gloriously fallen in love with the

world—just as he is this Christmas. The years have simply made him more so. He has come to just love humanity wherever he finds it. He does not exalt the Lord Jesus and the truth of the Holy Scriptures above his love for humanity. He believes he will see many of them in heaven without the Bible Gospel and the Jesus Name of saving grace. He has become a savior to men in sin who may remain in sin and error and be comforted by His message of love for everyone except the fundamentalist. With regards to the fundamentalists, he is bent against them, rejecting even certain brethren he formerly loved, honored, and cherished. The distance this man has made in his journey through life has done more to change the definition of historic Christianity than any other man in church history. Never have so many believed so little truth about Christianity as presented by Dr. Graham. He loves Rome; he contributes to the Harlot of history and prophecy. He has mastered the artistry of error. He is still loved by the wrong crowd, the large crowd, the apostate crowd. No one but Jesus left the world a better place in which to live, but Dr. Graham will leave his generation a worse place than he was born to. We were deeply honored, at the time of the death of our esteemed friend and unusual fundamentalist, Dr. Bob Jones, Jr., Chancellor of Bob Jones University. We need to remember Graham's conclusive words and observations made publicly of the Chancellor at his death. At that time, Billy Graham made it crystal clear that Chancellor Jones, being a fundamentalist, was no friend of his. We, as fundamentalists, lauded what he condemned.

The fundamentalists of Billy

Graham's day have been identified almost always as those who opposed his association with liberalism. He is now identified publicly and in publications as the ecumenical evangelist. I sincerely believe there was a time in his ministry when he never intended to go this far in his error, but the inertia of his fellowships and compromises was greater than his earlier identifications with fundamentalism. His ability, in Christian character, to rise to a conclusion for personal truth in the end-days of his life are now impossible. However, error has a way of completely taking a man away from all his moorings when he breaks the first rope at the stable dockings of God's Word.

### **What Shall We Now Do With Christmas?**

In the November-December, 1994 issue, I wrote another article for our *Straightway* publication entitled "Fundamentalism at Christmastime, 1994." In that article I stated that I believed the next generation of Fundamentalists would find themselves in their greatest peril but also with their greatest privilege. I likened the fundamentalists of the earlier generation to those who were mainly interested in the necessary root and birth of the movement. I proceeded to mention that the time must come for the fruit and the harvest of fundamentalism. Between the root and the fruit the fundamentalists have enjoyed a number of great successes, including the building of their great churches, their missionaries, evangelists, colleges, and pastors. That very success would be the great test to see if the fruit and harvest of the Lord would truly honor the Lord Jesus Christ.

The amazing thing about our suc-

cesses is that we have had evangelism to succeed without a spiritual revival from the Lord. In the past, revival of God's people often preceded the ingathering of souls in the ministry of evangelism, but our time has been somewhat different. I believe that revivals come by a sovereign act of God and a human responsibility of God's people in obedience to God's sovereign Word. There could be human responsibility without God's sovereignty and still be no revival. However, I cannot grasp such a sovereign will of God being given without human responsibility, too.

A National Christmas, now, is in such a deep departure from our American Experiment, when this nation was founded "under God," that we can only see a perverted public facade of a secular and commercial effort, proving the nation has become Christless. However, a remnant remains!

Some years ago I wrote a Christmas oratorio and represented a musical presentation in five parts with a smaller group singing the appropriate scriptures concerning the first coming of Christ, and a larger musical group singing the appropriate scriptures concerning the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. These two Advents of Christ were compared in similar circumstances in the world. This article closes with that comparison. We must still read the Bible, not the newspaper or modern men given to the curiosity of prophecy, if we are to know the times in which we live. The parts of that oratorio entitled *We Stand Where They Stood* were as follows:

Part One - A Time When Only a Few Would Know Jesus. (At the

first Christmas and now)

Part Two - A Time When An Antichrist Would Come (Herod and the Final Antichrist)

Part Three - A Time of Trouble (Herod's Slaughter of the Infants and the Great Tribulation destructions)

Part Four - A Time of Safekeeping (The Safe Flight into Egypt and The Millennial Reign With Christ)

Part Five - A Time of Returning (Jesus Returns from Egypt to Nazareth and the Lord Jesus will return to the Clouds for His saints, and a final return to the Earth as the Prince of Peace)

There is no explanation why Jesus has not yet returned in judgment to the earth concerning sodomy, lawlessness, and the apostasy, except that God is displaying His greatest mercy above His former days in history. There is a grand, extravaganza going on, all around the world, of this increased mercy of Almighty God. This display is greater than the mercy of 120 years before the Flood; it is greater than the words of the Two Angels who spoke to Lot, "Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither" (Genesis 19:22a).

We are, in our generation, learning more about "...his mercy endureth forever..." (Psalm 106:1; 107:1; 118:1; 136:1; 138:8; etc.). His longsuffering of mercy continues.

### **Foundations at Christmas**

Friday, December 18, 7:30 p.m.

Omni House

**A Sacred Music Presentation**