

The STAR of the Show

(continued from front page)

translate that verse (Daniel 3:25) as “the son of a god, “ or “the son of the gods.” One thing is for sure—**God gave this thick-headed, “pagan” monarch some excellent eyes!** It is amazing what God will show people in the merciful hope that they will seek for more and more light and truth. This king took quite a while, and ended up experiencing the most dramatic and shocking humiliation you can imagine (Daniel 4). He *finally* learned the lesson directly from God, and **boldly took his stand, announcing the truth to his entire kingdom.** THAT takes both courage and conviction! Do you have it? If so, do you use it? If not, you should seek and find it.

That “tender mercy” which God showed toward that ancient king, He later shined into the living quarters of John the Baptist’s parents. **John’s father, like king Nebuchadnezzar, publicly declared** that his son, John, would go before the promised Messiah Christ, “to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the **Dayspring** from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:76-79).

That word, “**Dayspring**,” can also be translated “**sunrising**” or “**branch**” (see “**Branch**” inside). Once again, these words are not accidental, for they fit perfectly with God’s eternal Plan... the Plan He Himself declared, piece by piece through the centuries of Old Testament history... and that history is HIS story! This is why after the Resurrection Jesus gave that tremendous summary of the central Old Testament message to those two sad disciples recorded

in Luke 24:25-27 as follows: “Then He said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Jesus wasn’t being harsh with them, for He knew they had the same “thickness” old King Nebuchadnezzar had. It is a thickness common to us all, but God in His tender mercy will cure us and lead us, if we will let Him. Then, He expects us...yes, even *commands us...*to take the same loving Light to others. Got a light?

Ok, so who is going to decide who **The Star of the Show** is? That God has spoken to man at different times and in different ways through His prophets, Hebrews 1:1 clearly declares. It then builds on that to say that “the cherry on top,” so to speak, of God’s outreaching revealing of Himself to mankind came through Jesus...but then it tells why! It states that God has “*in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*” In verse 6 God commands: “*Let all the angels of God worship Him.*” Verses 7, 8 contrasts the “minister” status given by God to the angels with God’s words regarding Jesus, by saying, “*But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever!’*” WOW... now that’s what I call credentials! and by no less than by God Himself! Jesus Christ cannot help but be the winner of **The Star of the Show! Crown Him!**

POWER POINTING TO THE PRINCE OF PEACE! If various people crowding a busy High Street suddenly began pointing to a tall building far to the left, would you look to the right? I doubt it. Like the rest, you would follow their pointing fingers to the object upon which they have focused their attention. Those people up & down the street may be of various ages & race, but you would still trust the united magnetism of their genuine, spontaneous & well-founded alarm. This issue tries to put in front of you some of the various prophecies concerning the One & only One Messiah that God ever promised. The focus of these various fingers point to One Object: Jesus Christ! This is the One who God’s prophet, Micah, said would be born in Bethlehem...just where those wise men found Him! Let’s ALL be wise!

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The

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“Lift up a standard for the people.” Isaiah 62:10

Gabriel L. Mancino - Editor. Printing in London since 1983
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Who is the final judge that decides the winner of “The Star of the Show” award? The Queen? X-Factor? Big Brother? American Idol? I’m a Celebrity? None of the above? Recently the Pope supposedly “forgave” John Lennon for saying that the Beatles were more famous than Jesus Christ. Hmm.

Long before the Beatles, Jesus Christ had, in reality, been put to the rear, making place for the stars of film, music, sports and such like. Even when Jesus was born, King Herod was both afraid and enraged that he had a new-born Competitor. Most people will do anything except allow Jesus to be “**The Star of the Show**”... well, that is, unless it is in some mocking production, like the Jerry Springer Opera.

It is pathetic when “Christians” expose their “**conflict of interest**” by worldliness that paralyzes and sterilizes any professing

Christians. For far too long, the rank and file of professed followers of Christ have sought the praise and popularity which belongs to the One they are intended to exalt in life and service.

Those foreign wise men of the Christmas story amaze me. Likely from **Iran’s ancient Zoroastrian faith**, God helped them to see more clearly so that they travelled that far distance by God’s guidance (with no cheap Easy Jet way) to worship the **True King. God lead them by a star to find THE Star!** St. Peter wrote: “*We have also the more sure word of the prophets; whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:*” (2 Pet. 1:19). “**Day Star**” is also translated “**Morning Star**,” which certainly fits with the Bible book, Revelation, 2:28 and 22:16!

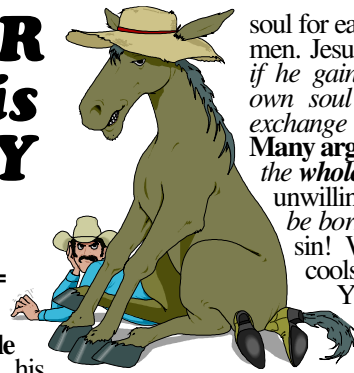
Centuries before the wise men, **Iraq’s greatest (Babylonian) king** seemed to “see through a glass darkly” when he looked in shock at the three prisoners he had thrown into the huge burning furnace for “insubordination.” He cried out to his staff: “*Didn’t we throw three men in the fire? But I see four, and the fourth is like the Son of God!*” Some choose to

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WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS!
God foretold the Messiah’s birth also in Isaiah 9 as follows: “*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*” The content of this issue agrees!!

DUMBER Than His DONKEY

Gabriel L. Mancino



Balaam is one of the most mysterious people in the Bible! There, his memorable story is mainly recorded in the book called "Numbers," chapters 22-24. You will find fascinating reading and valuable lessons in those few chapters! Read it and see.

Balak, king of Moab saw how Moses and the Hebrew people defeated other strong people called Amorites. The Hebrews were on their way from Egyptian slavery to the Land God promised them. So Balak, his leaders, and the leaders of nearby Midian got the idea to contact this prophet named Balaam. Putting it briefly, **Balaam was like so many others, who want the best of both worlds.** He did much in obedience to God. You will see when you read it. But he had a heart problem, and it showed itself mostly in his excessive desire for reward... money! (See Balaam also in 2 Pet. 2:14,15; Jude 11).

Most people would think that Balaam did a great job, and was faithful to God. Wrong. Balaam compromised critical issues, and paid dearly for it. Here is a man who even declared some of the greatest prophecies of the coming Messiah-Christ, saying "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Num. 24:17). **Just like our front page article, Balaam saw the STAR!** With the Star was a **Sceptre**, which is an instrument a king holds as a symbol of authority and power.

As to the clipart above, **no, the donkey didn't sit on Balaam**, but it did practically everything it could to save its owner from God's immediate Judgment. God's angel stood unseen in the path, sword in hand, ready to bring finality to this man who gambled his

soul for earthly trinkets and the praise of mere men. Jesus asks "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:36, 37). Many argue that they are not trying to "gain the whole world," yet, like Balaam, they are unwilling to lose the craved item! We "must be born again," and we must "die out" to sin! What can it mean when something costs or kills our faithfulness to God?

You answer. SELF becomes "boss," for SELF knows what's best! No, SELF is *deceived* and God is *grieved*...and insulted. God help us.

The angel was **unseen to Balaam**, but not to his donkey. I say, the animal didn't sit on Balaam in order to stop him, and God won't sit on *you*, either. God never forced anyone to board Noah's Ark. All were regularly and passionately warned, but none were forced against their will to get on board. So, is God bad for not forcing you to obey Him? No.

Balaam's lust for his prize turned him into a madman. St. Peter says that Balaam "was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet" (2 Pet.2:16); Balaam was worse than his "dumb ass." Years ago, I witnessed **Donald Soper**, over 50 years' a weekly speaker at **Hyde Park**, and then in his 90s, turn and calmly say to a particularly constant nuisance: "You ARE an ass." Rather than swearing, I believe Lord Soper was simply, but frankly addressing the man's sheer foolishness...like Balaam's.

Balaam was a man that had experienced special guidance from God, but gambled it away. **His was a Falling Star. His light went out.** He declared that he wanted to "die the death of the righteous" (23:10), but was unwilling to live the life of the righteous! He "heard the words of God, saw the vision of the Almighty, had his eyes wide open and saw that God's ways were lovely" (24:4,5), yet this man gambled it away... **FOR WHAT?!**

At Christmastime people often think of gifts, yet what gift is so great or so desirable that a person would trade their soul for it? This is how sin, self and Satan join together to deceive and ruin lives in this life, and send them to hell later. **KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE STAR!**

Credit Crunch or Mammon Munch? "Mammon" refers to money & materialism (Matt. 6:24). Many had the same problem **BEFORE** this current economic "crisis," that is, wasting money, time...life. God calls us in Isaiah 55:1 and then says, "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance!" God then points us to His Messiah: "Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." God then invites ALL: "Seek the Lord while He may be found," etc. Repent and Receive!



The BRANCH to Bank On!

Gabriel L. Mancino

With the serious economic situation on, this article is not intended merely to *humour* the reader, nor to deepen your fear. Yet, we are witnessing only *the beginning* of trouble...and *this* trouble is set to bring an even worse situation. But the words of an old church song guides us away from all false "securities," when it says: "On Christ, the Solid Rock, I stand, all other ground is sinking sand...all other ground is sinking sand." **THERE IS HOPE! There IS a Branch to bank on... or bank IN**, regardless of the present world financial crisis that seems to be closing in tighter and tighter, like fences for capturing cattle.

In this Christmas issue, we have put Bible references to Christ as The Star, the Day Star, the Morning Star, the Dayspring, Sunrising and **Branch... Aha! there's that word, Branch!** This issue contains some of the prophetic names referring to Jesus Christ, the Messiah-Saviour long-promised by God. Isaiah the prophet shares many names of the Messiah in chapter 9 (see front page red print), speaking of "a babe born...a son given." He gives us further information regarding the identity of God's Messiah in 11:1, calling him "a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him." Jesus used Isaiah's words referring to God's Spirit upon Him (chapter 61) at the beginning of His earthly ministry. If you read Luke 4:18 etc. you will see the kind of Spirit that is! Anyway, we see (above) that the promised Messiah was to come from Jesse's son, King David.

We already saw through Balaam

(bottom of left page), that God's Messiah would come from Jacob, who was the grandson of Abraham. Of course, Jacob had 12 sons, so which son? Well, dying Jacob tells us himself in Genesis 49:10, saying, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from his offspring, until **Shiloh** comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people." Jacob's son, Judah, is the answer. Note that word, **Sceptre** again, just like Balaam used! The name "Shiloh," refers to God's

Messiah again as "the sent," "the seed," and "the peaceable or prosperous one." And what kind of peace and prosperity can He give? Isaiah (above) said that the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, but Jesus offers to *share* His Spirit with us! So, Isaiah later informs us, "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious" (11:10). When we welcome God to live within us, it makes us God's "dwelling!" What a glorious resting place that allows a human being to enjoy!

God's prophet, Zechariah, foretold Christ's "Triumphant Entry" into Jerusalem before His crucifixion, (9:9). Zechariah had earlier foretold Christ's coming, saying "For behold, I am bringing forth **My Servant the BRANCH**" (3:8), and said that this "BRANCH" would take away the sin of the land "in one day." This Christ did on the Cross. No wonder, a little later he added "Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: **'Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the LORD; Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both'**" (6:12,13). Again we see what a peace and rest! As the economic system craftily crumbles before our very eyes, there is *still* a **trustworthy BRANCH to bank in and bank on, where Jesus said it's safe** (Matthew 6:19,20)! **Put your deposits there today and gain the greatest interest anywhere! BANK ON IT!**

Malachi, whose prophecy closes the Old Testament, tells of a coming day, "burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be dry grass." God says that then He "will leave them neither root or branch!" The time to humble ourselves and accept God's Messiah-BRANCH is NOW! Malachi adds, "But to you who fear My name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves"—"fat" in the fullness of God's Grace and Spirit!

We meet at Christ Church on the corner of Brent Street and Heriot Road in Hendon (NW4) at 5:45 pm Sundays. Nearest Tube: Hendon Central.