

December 2023



GLOBAL TRAINING NETWORK

Our Itinerary



- Nov 30-Dec 17: Nepal Ministry**
- Dec 24:** Floris Baptist Church, Floris, IA
- Jan 11-Feb 3: Philippines Ministry**
- Feb 11:** Sonoita Bible Church, Sonoita, AZ
- Feb 15-18:** GTN Leadership Gathering, Scottsdale, AZ
- Feb 21:** Ponderosa Bible Church, Payson, AZ
- Feb 25:** First Baptist Church, Nogales, AZ
- March 3:** Maranatha Baptist Church, Globe, AZ
- March 10:** First Baptist Church, Duncan, AZ
- March 17:** Grace Church, Chino Valley, AZ



Unseen Realities III: More Than a Baby

Ask 10 people the meaning of Christmas and you may get 10 different answers. It is a time for togetherness and generosity, a time for children, a time of redemption from our Scrooge-like ways, or a time for falling in love. Someone always admonishes us to "put Christ back in Christmas." Even this falls short.



*an end in itself.* God had a reason for invading this dark world, and we do well to dwell on this in December.

Last month we saw that **God was willing to sacrifice greatly to restore our broken relationship with him. Jesus came in to the world to BE that sacrifice. Think of all that means!**

This was no ordinary child. Jesus had a human mother, but his father is God! As a member of the Trinity, Jesus existed eternally before his birth as a human baby. John 1:1-8 describes him as 'the Word' which in the beginning was with God and was God himself. When he was born, "the Word became

flesh" (John 1:14). This is critical! In order for Jesus' sacrifice to cover the sins of humans, Jesus had to be a sinless human. In order for his sacrifice to cover the **entire** human race, he had to be God. The baby nursing at Mary's breast, was both God and man in one tiny bundle. Think of it!

**Because of Jesus' nature and purpose on earth, ugly spiritual conflict surrounded his birth on that quiet Bethlehem night.** Unseen all around that tranquil manger scene, a desperate attempt by Satan to thwart God's plan was already




As 2023 Comes to a Close . . .

Thank you for helping us to carry out the words of II Timothy 2:2, carefully training leaders who then go on to train others. In 2023 we brought training to 347 pastors and leaders, who in turn, taught over 1000 other leaders! This training resulted in at least 1172 salvations and many new churches launched by our students in the countries we serve! **If God so moves you, there is still time to invest in this fruitful work before the end of 2023!** If you are already partnering with us, I just want to say this: **YOUR GIVING AND PRAYING HAS MADE ALL OF THIS POSSIBLE!! THANK YOU, AND MAY YOU HAVE A VERY BLESSED CHRISTMAS!** WELL DONE!

Where in the World Is Bob This Month?

As I write, I am in the back of a classroom in a town called Mahendranagar somewhere in western Nepal. My partner, Dr. John Punalur, is teaching a class on pastoral care. This week my course is "Studying the Bible with a Sermon in Mind." We



have 24 students evenly divided between men and women. Things are going very well. Next week I will be teaching my theology course "Foundations of the Christian Faith II" in Hetauda, a city in Southern Nepal. I will be on my own next week without a partner. This is ok since any discussion of theology expands to fill all the available time. I plan to return home on December 16, by God's grace. Along with Dr. Punalur, I have done a pro-life demonstration with fetal models here and will do so again in Hetauda. I am thrilled with the response all our teaching has been receiving here from leaders hungry for ministry tools. That said, I am also looking forward to a brief respite over the holidays before heading back out to the Philippines in January. To God be the glory. 

**Unseen Realities III: More Than a Baby (cont'd)**

underway. It would be an epic battle. Simeon, an old servant of God, was allowed to lay eyes on the Lord's Savior before his own death. He held the baby in his arms and prophesied about Jesus' life, declaring that Jesus "is destined to cause the rising and falling of many in Israel." Speaking directly to Mary, he added, "and a sword will pierce your soul also" (Luke 2:34-35). Simeon's allusion to the spiritual divide created by Jesus' preaching and the death he would die was disquieting to Mary and Joseph to say the least. Simeon's words reflected the warfare already underway. Even as he spoke, the fury of hell was being unleashed against God's Son in the spiritual realm. Revelation 12 describes this warfare in vivid imagery. Satan is painted as a great red dragon waiting for the blessed woman to give birth. He plans to savagely devour the child. Michael and the angels are described as making war against the dragon and his demons to prevent this. The battle spilled into the physical realm as Herod sought the child to destroy him. Warned by an angel, Joseph and Mary fled in the night, living in Egypt for a time. **The dragon was not strong enough to prevail!** This same warfare surrounded Jesus' ministry right up to his arrest and crucifixion. He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11), and continued to be tempted right up to the night he was arrested. Satan's main battle plan was to destroy God's Messiah. It was Satan himself who inspired Judas to betray Jesus (John 13:27). Satan's backup plan seemed to involve tempting Jesus to disobey God the Father. Jesus' prayer that God would "take this cup



away" (Luke 22:42) involved a strong temptation to avoid the cross entirely! In the end he walked the last mile of that torturous road for us all. **This was the great climactic moment in that massive spiritual battle!** Doubtless, Satan believed he had won when Jesus breathed his last. **But when Jesus rose triumphantly from his grave, the devilish celebration ground to a halt. Satan had lost both the battle and the war!** Salvation became possible. The final doom of the Devil became a guarantee. The innocent and helpless child in Mary's arms became the great champion of righteousness, the destroyer of evil, the redeemer of mankind, and our personal savior! **The baby in the manger became the Savior on the cross!** **The fellowship God desires with the human race is now ours to enjoy.** It includes fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ both near and far (1 John 1:3). At the center of this unique human fellowship is the divine fellowship with God and his Son, a fellowship facilitated by the Holy Spirit who indwells every believer everywhere. **The fellowship we enjoy with God and his people is a mere taste of life in the coming age—a spoonful of the ocean of God's grace to be revealed in ages to come!** Heaven will surprise and thrill us forever! For now "we see in a glass darkly, but then face to face" (1 Cor 13:12)! THIS is what God has accomplished. THIS was his aim. THIS is why Jesus was born. **THIS unseen reality is what Christmas is REALLY all about! Jesus IS much more than a baby.** ∞

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**Our Praises & Prayer Requests**



- Praise God for new opportunities to share our ministry this month
- Praise God that our year-end mailings are completed and in the mail.
- Praise God for a very fruitful year of ministry now coming to a close.
- Please pray for our Nepal ministry Nov 30-Dec 17.
- Please pray for strong year-end giving so that we end the year 'in the black.'
- Please pray for our ministry in the Philippines coming up in January!

**Ministry Partnership**

Your financial partnership is essential as we carry out our God given ministry. Please follow the instructions below or on the enclosed response card (US mail version).

*"Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account... And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:17, 19)*

You may give online at:

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