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*KEEP Christ IN Christmas*



## Our grandpas

By Al Schneider

When Clarence Darrow outsmarted William Jennings Bryan in the famous Monkey Trial, also known as the Scopes Trial, there was much rejoicing in the land. The monkey won the public opinion battle that day, though, as everyone now knows, Darrow did not play fair. To take a tooth from what was once a wild hog roaming through Nebraska, and then construct a somewhat human form around it, ranks as not only comedic, but wildly unethical. This evidence was presented as the long sought missing link that would bring credence to a nation of skeptics regarding evolution. Darrow's folly was neither the first nor the last in the parade of hominids to surface. The fact that we still haven't uncovered a realistic specimen hasn't stopped educators from teaching evolution as factual.

I have scanned the lineup of proclaimed hominids, our apparent ancestors. They are an ugly lot. Among these is Australopithecus Africanus, one of my favorites. His facial features exhibited some human attributes, but my thinking is that he had a ways to go. For one thing, he needed to discover a better way to comb his face. I'd call it a stretch to say his descendants walk among us. A more likely candidate might be Paranthropus Aethiopicus, who dates back about 2.5 million years. Noteworthy is his small brain, suitable for drum beating and similar activities, perhaps foreshadowing such antics as the Wall Street protests. You have to like Homo Egester. He appears bright eyed with much potential. And then there's Homo Erectus who is shown upright holding a twig. I consider that real progress. And then let us not forget Lucy who inhabited the earth more

than three million years ago. She could run and walk on two legs. Gee.

Add to the mix those known hominids that have since been proven frauds. These include the Piltdown Man, Java Man, and Peking Man. For that matter, some have determined that Lucy resembles a rainforest chimpanzee more than one of us. But we shouldn't rush to judgment. Scientists have so few specimens to work with, even after centuries of digging, so I'm thinking, let them have Lucy.

My feeling is that these diggers are taking the wrong approach to prove their theories. They're looking in all the wrong places to find a hominid. They should put aside their shovels and open their eyes. I never told anyone, but I once spotted a hominid. Back in the 1970s, I had occasion to drive by a college campus in New York State. There he was, a creature with apparent human characteristics, leaning against a lamppost. I was unable to determine whether there was life in this creature, but how else would he have made it to this place? There he stood, motionless, but erect, and seemingly far more advanced than Paranthropus Aethiopicus, for example. While his lengthy hair hid many of his traits, his eyes had a comatose look about them, perhaps recalling happier days in the jungle.

I thought of parking my car and informing the biology lab of my discovery, but then decided not to. Let them find their own hominids.

Looking back now after 40 years, I feel less certain that what I beheld was a hominid. It just seems so illogical that I would be the first and only one to ever spot one. But if not a hominid, what was it? •

## A blessing from Bethlehem

By Clifford Lones

The town of Bethlehem in Israel is very significant at Christmas time. We sing, "O Little Town of Bethlehem." It is the little town where Jesus was born. Since Christmas is about the birth of Jesus, it's no wonder we talk and sing about the place where He was born. Names in the Bible, as well as in our day, have meanings. Bethlehem is a compound word. "Beth" means "house," and "Lehem" means "bread." So Bethlehem is the "house of bread." It was probably named such because the area around the town was a very fruitful area.

The town of Bethlehem has a long history. Back around 1700 B.C. in the Biblical book of Genesis, we read of Jacob (whose name was later changed to Israel) and his wife Rachel who were traveling and stopped in the town of Bethlehem because she was about to give birth to a baby. We read there in Genesis 35:16-19, "And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was a little way come to Ephrath; and Rachel travailed and she had hard labour. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, 'Fear not, thou shalt have this son also.' And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called his name Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem." Note that Rachel as she was dying in childbirth named her son "Ben-oni," which name means "son of sorrow." However, Jacob named him "Benjamin," which name means "son of right hand." This happened in Bethlehem.

Around 1000 years later (700 B.C.) the prophet Micah wrote in Micah 5:2, "But thou Bethlehem

Ephrath, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler of Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting." Note that this Ruler would come out of Bethlehem who was from "everlasting."

When the wise men came to King Herod in Jerusalem they asked him where the Ruler should be born because they saw His star in the East. Herod asked the religious leaders where the Ruler was to be born, and they, referring to the prophet Micah, quoted his prophesy (stated above). So the wise men went to Bethlehem. This was all about the birth of Jesus, as we all well know about Christmas.

What is so very significant about all this in Bethlehem is that Jesus (the Bread of Life — John 6:35) was born to become "a man of sorrows" (Isaiah 53:3) which is "Ben-oni" and also the Son who sat down at the right hand of God (Hebrews 1:13) which is "Benjamin." Yes, Jesus suffered the sorrows of dying on the cross and then was resurrected to ascend into heaven to sit down at the right hand of God. This was done for our salvation. He died on the cross because of our sins and He ascended into heaven to intercede for us. Therefore, Jesus said He was the way, the truth and the life, and no man comes unto the Father but by Him (John 14:6). Yet, we must personally pray and receive Him as our Saviour as it says in John 1:12, "But as many as receive Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

Yes, you can receive Him right now by praying and this Christmas you will be a Christ-one, that is, a Christian. •

## Jesus, Yes!

By Al Wezeman

"Jesus, Yes," is a way of saying that a person who trusts in Jesus takes delight in knowing Jesus as Savior and Lord. There is a profound joy in serving Jesus. Having said that, the question may be raised as to why a person would be so delighted in knowing Jesus.

The answer to the above can be found in the Holy Bible. The Holy Bible is the Word of God written by persons who were inspired by the Spirit of God, meaning those persons were guided and led in their thinking to write what God wanted them to write. Throughout the 66 individual books of the Holy Bible, a common theme prevails.

Starting with the book of Genesis, with the very first verse we find the statement that God created the universe. Progressing through the first two chapters is a delight because God made everything perfect. In chapter three we find disappointment and grief as man in God's image has disobeyed his/her Creator and ruined the perfection of God's creation. However this happened as related in chapter three of Genesis, we know that God had to separate us from Himself because of His perfection/holiness.

In Genesis 3:15, the common theme of the Holy Bible begins. It begins because God was not willing to throw us away and give up on us. No, God made a promise in Genesis 3:15 to send a Savior. We understand verse 15 from the context of the New Testament of the Holy Bible. We see here that the New Testament clarifies the prophesy in the Old Testament. The offspring of Eve in Genesis 3:15 is none other than the Jesus of the New Testament. The promise of a Savior who would take away the sin of the world was made thousands of years ago. In fact, Jesus came two thousand years ago, so we

who live now are after the fact and are nearing the end of time.

As we look at some of the details of the common theme, we are amazed at the things that happened throughout history. God not only kept the ancestry of Jesus alive (read the story of Noah), but relates how the people lived. We might think Jesus came from the "best" people, but when we read the ancestry, we find the opposite. God called a people to keep the line of Jesus alive. The theme enters the New Testament as related in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).

When we read the Gospel of John we realize why a person could find joy and delight in Jesus. In the first five verses of chapter one, we find out who Jesus is. We find Jesus is God. We find Jesus was the Creator. We find Jesus is life.

A person may ask how Jesus could be God (sinless) and still be human. We need to read Luke, chapter one, verses 26-38 to find out the answer of Jesus' sinless nature.

As you know, Jesus came to take away the curse of sin. If you do not know, read John, chapter 17 where Jesus prays to His Father for Himself, His disciples and for us. Jesus wants His people to know and serve Him. Chapters 18-20 relate the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and His rising from the dead. He conquered death!

The sacrifice of Jesus was necessary for our salvation because we cannot make any sacrifice to God sufficient to pay the penalty for our sin.

We started out by saying we find great joy and delight in knowing Jesus as Savior and Lord. We read God's Word and the Holy Spirit gives us faith to believe.

John 3:16 sums up the common theme. We are not condemned, but have eternal life. Praise the Lord! •