



CONNECTED

July-September, 2026

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64 years & counting
August 3, 1962
August 3, 2026

Almost 72 years ago, I met the King of kings. All of my life, I had heard about Him and had no doubt that He was real. I *believed in Him* like I believed in George Washington. On a Thursday afternoon out in the woods behind my quaint little East Texas home at about 4:30, I came face-to-face with Him in my heart. I realized that it was not enough to merely believe the facts and pay lip-service to Him. I was a sinner, and I knew it. I had tried to be better, a *good boy*. It didn't work. I knew that I had no hope outside of Jesus Christ who went to the cross and died in my place. My best was not enough. That afternoon, out there in those woods with nobody around, in my heart in desperation I gave up and trusted Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior.

That glorious day changed my life including my eternity. I was 13 years old. Since then, He has been my King, my Lord, my Master. 30 days before my 14th birthday, He put me in the gospel ministry and has allowed me to spend my entire adult life in His service. Oh, what an honor! I am one of the most blessed persons who has ever walked this planet.

For Mrs. H and me, the last 3 months has been a *white-water-rapids*. To start April, for the first time since

2009, we went to a theater. *The Great Awakening* was playing, and it is powerful! Really powerful! You would do yourself a favor to see this excellent presentation of a critical slice of America's Christian history. Two days later, I preached the first of 3 funerals in close succession. Interwoven with too many doctor visits, we spent a week of very special time with dear couples in North Texas: Chase and Joy Finch and Ed and Debbie Neal. I was honored to preach at Midway Baptist Church in McKinney. We came home just in time to head to Mexia, Texas for one of those funerals.

Satan hates the Basic Bible Truths. On Monday, April 20 our friends from Highland Baptist Church in El Reno, Oklahoma arrived in Houston to videotape my *Basic Bible Truths Training Seminar*. The goal is to put the seminar on their Basic Bible Truths YouTube Channel. This venue is making this soul-winning tool available to the world. See the QR Code on this newsletter. About 4:00 o'clock, these brothers stopped by a local Walmart store for less than 15 minutes. When they came out of the store, thieves had broken out the rear door window and stolen all of the video equipment. Thanks to the many who have helped replace all of the equipment. The video sessions have been

rescheduled: August 17-19. During May, both of us passed go again. The first weekend of May, we drove to Cleburne to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Prairie Vista Baptist with Pastor Robert Stephens and the church. What a blessing to have dinner with Lonnie and Kaye Collier! We drove from Cleburne to Gatesville to show our love and care to precious ministry friends. We made it home just in time for the third funeral, and headed to Lake Limestone to conduct a Saturday wedding for a dear couple.

Our son and daughter-in-law were in Texas from Colorado for a week. The two days with them were precious. A few days later, we were able to join them in Colorado for a bit of down-time. Two dear couples of precious lifelong friends joined us in South Fork. It is such a special privilege to fly fish the gorgeous Rio Grande one more time.

Suddenly, we're into July and eager to be a part of the Rodgers Missions Conf.



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COPING OUT

Who do you know that hasn't faced challenges? It's not a cinch that those born with a *silver spoon* will not bottom-out on drugs, succumb to obnoxious pride, lose all sense of humility and compassion, become greedy and cruel and live empty, unfulfilled and lonely lives. Many born in poverty struggle with resentment, bitterness and a fight to survive. Gangs are always recruiting. Crime makes its way into countless lives; victims are everywhere. There are health problems, and nobody is immune. A car wreck, injury, fall or cancer can change health status really quick. Financial challenges are never far away. Relationships can turn sour. Who doesn't know about betrayals, raw deals, unexpected disasters and unfair treatment?

Chances are that you know some really *delightful people*. They're positive, uplifting, happy and encouraging. It's a joy to be around them. You'd think they never had trouble or a care in the world.

Many years ago, I was on Interstate 20 passing through Midland, Texas. I was sobered by the reality of a big billboard which said, "*Welcome to Midland, Texas! Home of 134,489 great people, and 13 ole soreheads.*" Yes! That's how life is.

Chances are that you also know a few "*ole soreheads.*" They're full of grips, blame and stories of how they were mistreated. They're negative, angry, hard and full of self-pity. Bitter! Without provocation, they will tell you what was and is wrong with their parents, their job and boss, their ex-mate, the church and the government. They know nothing of joy; and being around them will test your joy.

Dig a little deeper, and you quickly realize that those delightful people and those "*ole soreheads*" have a lot in common. Every one of them had a truck-load of blessings, and every one of them faced hardships and heartaches beyond adequate description. In many cases, the challenges and heartaches of those *delightful people* far exceeded those of the "*ole soreheads.*" Most of us would be shocked to know the trials some of the sweetest spirits in our lives have faced.

I find it hard to be too sympathetic with some of the whiners, the thumb-suckers, the angry blamers in life. Grow up! Face reality! Everybody faces challenges. We all have problems. There are Goliaths in every life: obstacles, hurts, raw deals, bad people.

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble," Job 14:1. Winners get knocked-down, but they get up and go on. Losers get knocked down, and they stay there. They blame, blame, blame! They get sour and bitter.

Every person has a choice. There's no excuse for coping-out. None!

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Note well: "*The pursuit of Happiness;*" not "*Happiness.*" No government can guarantee "*Happiness.*" The duty of government is to guarantee a level playing field which enables every person to *pursue* happiness.

Just how does a person *pursue* "*happiness?*" Clear and simple. The answer is by virtuous living: honesty in word and deed, respect of the person and property of others, responsible living including a hard work ethic, personal accountability, moral thought and character, commitment to law and order, humility, compassion and general integrity. Even Socrates said, "*Virtue is both necessary and sufficient for happiness. You cannot be truly happy without being virtuous.*" Thomas Jefferson said, "*. . . without virtue, happiness cannot be.*" Those who founded America at the peril of their own lives believed there could be no life, liberty or happiness apart from a virtuous populace.

Where do you find the standard and manual on virtue? The Bible! In speaking of virtuous living, Jesus made it clear: "*If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them,*" **John 14:13.** The Bible is humanity's best guide on virtue and how to do things right. Dr. Benjamin Rush a ratifier of the Constitution said, "*without virtue there can be no liberty*" He called for "*the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity, by means of the Bible; for this divine book, above all others favors that equality among mankind, that respect for just laws.*"

To long survive, America **must** return to her roots of virtuous living. The Bible warns, "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God,*" **Psalm 9:17.** Thomas Jefferson asked, "*Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?*"

A little girl had just finished her first week of school. "*I'm just wasting my time,*" she said to her mother, "*I can't read, I can't write, and they won't let me talk!*"

A PSALM FOR AMERICA

Great God of Heaven and Earth, please hear my prayer for America; she is truly in need of your intervention and help.

She was once undergirded with knowledge of your Word;
Today, many Americans do not believe your Word is inspired.

From her birth as a nation, your Word was her final authority;
Now, multitudes of Americans doubt your existence.

The Bible was once her primary school-room textbook;
Today, even your Ten Commandments are mostly excluded from her classrooms.

A Theistic worldview has mostly vanished from American culture;
In this country, science has become the ultimate authority.

Vast numbers embrace an atheistic world view;
Many Americans view life and make decisions as if you do not exist.

Jehovah, you have warned us that the nations that forget you shall be severely judged;
I plead for your mercy and clemency for this land I love and call home.

Lester Hutson

"Most sermons could use an editor." Mark Dever

THIS IS AN EXCELLENT BOOK, ESPECIALLY FOR SERIOUS READERS

Psalms: Reading and Studying the Book of Praises

By W. H. Bellinger, Jr.

Hendrickson's Publishers, 1990

Peabody, Massachusetts 01961-3473

ISBN: 0-943575-35-4

Psalms: Reading and Studying the Book of Praises is a good read for any serious student of the Bible; however, it is primarily an academic book. Including the Scripture index, it has only 161 pages. Don't let that fool you; the book is so full of good, deep, mind-challenging information that it is not an easy, fast read.

Very quickly, it becomes obvious that the ***Psalms*** of the Bible are not as simple as they may at first appear. Like all of the Bible, the ***Psalms*** are loaded with deep truths. The ***Psalms*** are Hebrew poetry, and they constitute a book of theology; although, they are factual, historical, prophetic and highly emotional. In one way or another, they are about the LORD (Yahweh) and His relationship to His people. The ***Psalms*** were at the center of ancient Israel's worship. Though they are about Israeli people, especially her kings; they are timeless. They remain applicable to God's people in every age, both privately and corporately. In ***Psalms: Reading and Studying the Book of Praises***, Dr. Bellinger does a very good job of validating that reality.

There are seven information-packed chapters in this book. Dr. Bellinger starts with much scholarly background information about the book of ***Psalms***. He deals with the setting, the shape which is subdivided into five books and collections within the Psalter. He does an excellent job explaining Hebrew poetry with its various kinds of parallelisms. He offers insight on reading the Psalms both privately and corporately. The Psalter (prayer and song book of the Bible) roughly falls into two types of psalms: Laments and Praise. Dr. Bellinger highlights the total and bold honesty of the Lament psalms. They candidly express the full range of emotions and feelings of the people in the lowest valleys of their lives: fear, anger, hatred, despair, passion and others. They Praise psalms equally express mountaintop emotions: joy, excitement, thanksgiving, praise and hope. Life is inseparably tied to God. It was the culture of ancient Israel. They were dependent on God. He was the center of their lives personally and corporately. Everything rose or fell with Him. He was their source of hope. Repeatedly, that theme echoes through the Psalter. ***Psalms: Reading and Studying the Book of Praises*** makes that reality so clear and easy to see.

Dr. Bellinger organizes the ***Psalms*** into four categories: **Praise, Lament, Royal and Wisdom**. The **Praise** psalms are subdivided into eight categories: General Hymns, Creation Psalms, Enthronement Psalms, Zion Psalms, Entrance Liturgies, Hymns with Prophetic Warnings, Trust Psalms and Thanksgiving Psalms. The **Lament** psalms are subdivided into Individual Psalms and Community Psalms. The **Royal** and **Wisdom** psalms are not subdivided.

Dr. Bellinger offers four beginning-points for psalm interpretation: (1) What is the type/structure of the psalm? (2) How was the psalm used in worship? (3) How did the community "shape" the psalm? (4) To what end does the psalm use language – parallelism, divine names, repetition, "loaded" terms, figures of speech.

Dr. Bellinger referred to many noted authorities on the Psalms, and documented this book very well. He leaned heavily on Hermann Gunkel. That Gunkel had much good regarding the Psalter seems to me to be beyond dispute; however, Gunkel was pretty deeply into redaction. I am unmovable on the fact that the entire Bible, including all of the ***Psalms*** were and are divinely inspired directly by God. *Higher Criticism* (redaction) subscribes to the idea that later communities sometimes altered Scriptures to make them more compatible to and supportive of their beliefs. That concept is without foundation and validity, and it undermines the authority of the Scriptures. I categorically reject it. I am aware that after they were written, the ***Psalms***, the ***Proverbs*** and other parts of Scripture were accumulated and organized; but that's an entirely different thing than rewriting or amending them.

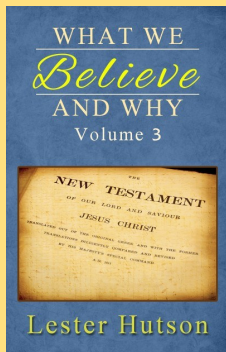
Dr. Bellinger touches on the prophetic element of the ***Psalms***, but he is very general in his treatment of this element of the ***Psalms***. It seems to me that a stronger and more specific treatment of the prophecies in the ***Psalms*** would have strengthened the book. Both the Old and New Testaments connect Jesus and His redemptive work as well as His coming kingdom to the Davidic Covenant which is intertwined in the ***Psalms***. Passages like ***Psalms 22*** point prophetically to Jesus Christ.

In many ways ***Psalms: Reading and Studying the Book of Praises*** is an excellent book. I recommend it as a very good resource.

Happy 250th Birthday to the United States of America
July 4, 1776—July 4, 2026

The gospel does what nothing else can do. As Dr. Erwin Lutzer well said, "We believe that the root cause of evil is not external systems, but rather, sin that lies in every human heart. Therefore, we strive for commonality among the races, not accentuating our differences. At the foot of the cross we confess there is common ground between all racial and ethnic diversity in the world. We stand together as sinners confessing our common need of personal redemption. We see the source of evil not outside us, but within us. We acknowledge . . . that we don't have a skin problem, but a sin problem."

Another release on AMAZON: *What We Believe and Why 3*



This third volume of *What We Believe and Why* is another anthology of essays addressing key doctrinal Bible issues. The 31 chapters provide detailed explanations loaded with scriptural apologetics and multiple Scripture references. This book is dedicated to sound exegesis and hermeneutics. Like volumes one and two, this book is in annotated outline form, making it ideal for teaching and systematic Bible study.

The book starts with a serious study of the importance of a Christian's spirit and attitude. It challenges readers to avoid the Pied Piper approach, and to think for themselves. This book deals with World Views, and shows that everybody has one. It takes a hard look at who we are, and at what God wants from every human. There is much information in this book on Jesus Christ including critical evidence proving Him to be the true Messiah. Another section looks at worshiping God, especially at the fact that to be valid with God, it must get past rituals, empty formality and distractions.

There is extensive material on the work of the Holy Spirit. This section involves the current work of Christ, and provides clarity into indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. This book sheds much light on the transitional era (the time of Christ's earthly ministry and the age of the apostles) including the highly misunderstood *Baptism of the Holy Ghost*. There's an exegetical trip through Romans 10, a critical look at *The*

Sinner's Prayer, justification by faith and the eternal security of the believer. Amazon links: [paperback](#), [ebook](#)

THE OVERTHROW OF AMERICA IS UNDER WAY

Most people are familiar with the *Frog-in-the-Kettle*. He who didn't realize he was being cooked to death until it was too late. It appears that multitudes of Americans are not paying attention.

America's godly culture is her foundation, and her culture is steadily being supplanted and overthrown with a starkly opposite culture. The United States of America was built upon godly, Christian beliefs. For many years, little-by-little, this foundation has been under attack. Today, a free Christian America is nearing total destruction.

Freedom has been, and is, being taken for granted by growing numbers of people who have been privileged to be a part of it. The vast majority of people place little value on virtue, integrity and wholesome character, which are a part of the foundation upon which freedom stands.

There's lots of loud talk about "culture," especially the culture that earmarked the founding of America. Culture! It's what a society or nation believes, values and pursues. The culture of any society is seen in where it spends its money, in its governmental priorities, in the work ethic and expectations of its people, in what it teaches in its educational system, in the value it places on the sanctity of life, in how its people treat each other, in its views on law and order and especially in its views and practices about God.

The world-view of any people profoundly impacts everything, and there are really only two fundamental world views: theistic and atheistic. Theistic people believe there's a God. Some believe there are many gods; some believe there is one God. In either case, God made and owns the world. He decides what is good or evil; right or wrong. He sets the rules, and He is the reason for law and order. God is the final authority on all things, including the family, government and religion. With belief in God comes accountability.

With an atheistic world-view, there are no absolutes; no final authority. It's survival of the fittest with no ultimate accountability. There is no good and evil or right or wrong. One person's opinion is just as good as another's. Morality is out. There is no life beyond the grave; it's all about "right here:" self, material things, pleasure, power and fame from the cradle to the grave.

Romans 1:18-32 is a striking exposé on a theistic versus an atheistic world-view. The passage is both a historical and prophetic account of how the world as a whole has moved, and will continue to move from theism to atheism. **Verse 25** says that over the years, man has changed "the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." This passage and many others describe how that for individuals, societies and nations, the consequences are disastrous.

American culture is far down this road to destruction. The godly culture which marked the United States of America from her inception and many years to follow has been steadily replaced by thinking and practices that leave God out of the picture. His ideas about work have been replaced with socialism which is the forerunner to Marxism/communism. Law and order are routinely ridiculed and rejected. Most institutions of authority are portrayed as bastions of oppression to be abolished: the home, the police, civil government at all levels, public education and even the church and the Ten Commandments. Most of the fundamental teachings of the Bible are treated as archaic and irrelevant: virtue, good character, morality, sex definitions and standards, marriage, financial principles including the Merit System. Today, a definite anti-Christian bias prevails in America; and the charge is being led by a biased and hostile media and a public education system. Anti-American ideologies abound in today's society, especially Islam and socialism. Both seek to abolish America's Christian culture, and to replace it with a totally opposing culture. Crime and violence are everywhere. Churches are impotent. Antisemitism is flourishing. Children are being mutilated with government support at taxpayer expense. Corruption is rampant in American politics. Waste and misuse of public funds is the order of the day in this country.

We must return America to her original godly culture. Our survival as a free society depends on it. As America entered World War 2 facing a seemingly impossible task, President Franklin Roosevelt said, "We can – we will – because we must." As people who believe in the God of the Bible, let us remember that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," **2 Timothy 1:7**. Let us never forget that "If God be for us, who can be against us?" **Romans 8:31**.