

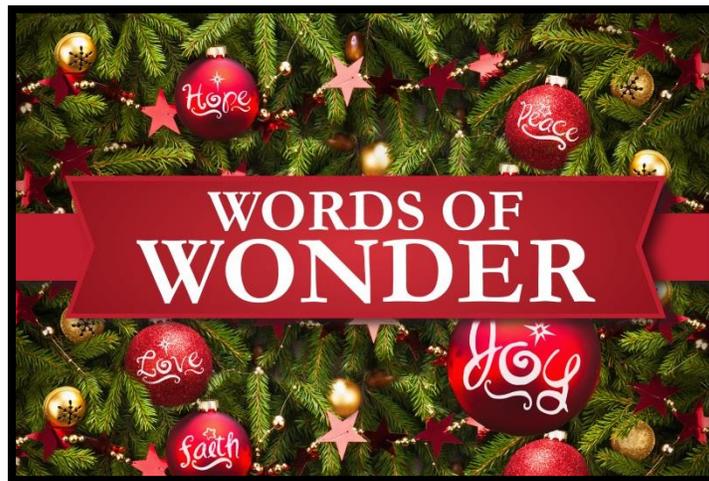
Words of Wonder

Christmas 2015

Written By

©Pastor Marty Baker

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The news about Mary’s pregnancy rocked Joseph’s world. Ever had unwanted news rock your world? Just when your life seemed to be falling into place, to be heading in a great direction and then, BAM, you receive some unwanted, gut-wrenching information which sends you into an emotional, what-am-I-going-to-do tailspin. That’s what happened to Joseph when he discovered his wife-to-be carried the child of someone else.

According to Jewish marriage laws, marriage involved three steps: One, the families agreed to the marriage; two, a public decree ... something akin to a western engagement announcement ... stated the couple was betrothed; and three, about year later the couple wed. Since Mary and Joseph had fulfilled step two, the only way to dissolve the relationship was through death or divorce. Matthew’s gospel tells us what happened as Joseph contemplated his two choices:

¹⁹ And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. ²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ “She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” ²² Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³

“BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,” which translated means, “GOD WITH US” (Matthew 1).

An angel of God told the godly young construction worker what God wanted him to do: Marry the young woman because the baby didn’t originate from an illicit relationship, but from the mysterious movement of the Spirit of God, the creator of all life.

Don’t you know it took great faith for Joseph to believe this? It also took great faith for him to believe that his virgin wife would bear the long-awaited Savior of the world. It took even greater faith for him to believe that this little child would, in fact, be the God-man, as prophesied some 700 years earlier by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14). But faith is what he wrapped his mind and heart around.

What was the nature of Joseph’s faith? Was it blind, lacking any evidence whatsoever? Did he just believe for belief’s sake? No, he had just enough proof to believe his wife’s pregnancy was supernatural. Just when he contemplated a way to divorce Marry privately ... to save face for both of them ... is when he happened to have a vivid dream in which an angel gave him inside information tied directly to ancient prophesies. This was not coincidental. No, it was providential and Joseph chose to place his faith in the facts.

Such is the nature of Christian faith not just this Christmas, but at all times. While the intellectuals of the world will demean faith by saying it is illogical, irrational, unthinking, and just an emotional crutch, they obviously do not understand the nature of faith. True faith is composed of reason wedded to belief, and in that order. Richard Dawkins, the champion of the new militant and highly hostile atheism, obviously doesn’t understand this premise:

I think that a case can be made that faith is one of the world’s great evils, comparable to the smallpox virus but harder to eradicate. Faith, being belief that isn’t based on evidence, is the principle vice of any religion.¹

I can’t help but wonder: Does Dawkins have any hard, tangible evidence for the concept of consciousness? Does he really have all the answers and proofs to adequately define various forms of energy? Just because you can’t fully understand something doesn’t mean you don’t believe in it based on the facts available to you, even if they are meager facts. Joseph had faith in the facts at hand, even though he didn’t fully understand them. He didn’t dismiss them either because he didn’t understand them. On the contrary, he willfully chose to embrace those facts and he married, Mary, believing a virgin was pregnant by an action of God and that the child was, in fact, no ordinary child but Immanuel, the Jewish Messiah.

Do you have faith this Christmas? More precisely, do you possess the unwavering faith of Joseph, faith which believed his little family unit would be graced with the long-awaited Messiah? Do you have faith in the facts of the historical life and redemptive work of Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth? Just as God challenged Joseph to have inexorable faith in the Christ-story, He is calling you, really challenging you, to have a robust faith in the baby of that story this Christmas. All of this talk, of course, naturally leads us to posit a pivotal question:

What Should Our Faith Focus On This Christmas?

¹ Richard Dawkins, Is Science Religion? *The Humanist*, Jan/Feb 1997, pp. 26-39.

From my perspective, there are two key areas our faith should focus on during this holy season. Sure, there are others, but these are of paramount importance to living both here and in eternity.

Faith In The Revelation Of God

Since God disclosed what occurred at the beginning of time to Moses, to John's vision of how the world ends and how God's kingdom comes to earth in Revelation, He has been in the business of giving us progressive and precise revelation concerning a variety of concepts. Where the coming of the Messiah is concerned, God gave us clear, concise, sometimes jaw-dropping insight into His identity, birthplace, and job description. Consider Micah's prophecy some 700 years before the coming of Jesus as detailed in the fifth chapter of his book:

¹ “Now muster yourselves in troops, daughter of troops; they have laid siege against us; with a rod they will smite the judge of Israel on the cheek. ² “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.” ³ Therefore He will give them *up* until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren will return to the sons of Israel. ⁴ And He will arise and shepherd *His flock* in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth. ⁵ This One will be *our* peace (Micah 5).

Contextually, either Micah speaks about the siege of the Assyrians against Jerusalem during the time King Hezekiah, or he speaks of the future siege and humiliation of Zedekiah by the Babylonians. Either way, the nation, despite a few godly kings here and there, was on a glide path to divine judgment and discipline for rejecting God, God's teachings and laws, and God's prophets. To encourage those who wondered whether any regal, godly, holy vitality could spring from the morass of wickedness perpetuated by the majority of Israel's politicians, God gave the people an off-the-charts prophetic revelation. Such is the nature of God. Even this Christmas, as the world slides off into a barbaric, immoral, corrupt, narcissistic pit, especially where world rulers are concerned, God seeks to give us hope by means of faith.

God's words to Israel couldn't have been clearer. He, personally, would bring the ultimate Davidic king/shepherd to Israel and he would institute world peace. All of this, of course, leads to a host of hermeneutical questions:

- *Where would this king/shepherd be born?* In the small, insignificant hamlet called Bethlehem in the region of Ephrathah, about six Roman miles southwest from Jerusalem. Interesting. When God wants to do something amazing and world-changing, He chooses an insignificant, no-name village. He's all about humility, isn't He?
- *Why the village of Bethlehem?* This was the city of David (1 Samuel 17:12, “Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced in years among men.”). The name of the “city” in Hebrew means “house of bread,” and Ephrathah means “fruitful.” No doubt, these names easily pointed to the Messiah who would be the bread of eternal life (John 6:48; 51). He

would also be the spiritually fruitful One, which is readily apparent from his earthly ministry.

- *What was/is the coming one's job description?* To be God's ruler of rulers, or king of kings. This truth had been part of God's promise to Israel through the prophets for hundreds of years (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 2; 89; Jeremiah 33:17; Isaiah 9:6-7; Ezekiel 37:24-25; Daniel 7:13-14; Hosea 3:4-5; Amos 9:11).
- *Who would this king be?* Micah gives us revelatory clarity in this final clause of verse, "His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity." The Hebrew for "his goings out" (וּמִוֶצֵאתָיו) is lexically tied to origins, or more precisely, his Davidic origin. However, his identity is much more than this as we see in the final prepositional phrase: "from the days of eternity" (מִיְמֵי עוֹלָם). As Dr. Charles Feinberg astutely observes, "This Ruler comes forth from Bethlehem in time, but He is not circumscribed by time. His goings forth have been from old, from everlasting. These goings forth were in creation, in His appearances to the patriarchs, and throughout the Old Testament history of redemption. The phrases of this text are the strongest possible statement of infinite duration in the Hebrew language (Ps 90:2; Pr 8:22-23). The preexistence of the Messiah is being taught here, as well as His active participation in ancient times in the purposes of God."² Isaiah, the contemporary of Micah, had revealed, by way of divine inspiration, that the Messiah would be "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14), and Micah's words here merely look at this name from another angle. The Messiah born to Joseph and Mary would, in fact, be the God beyond time and space. Amazing, isn't it? Amazing that He would become one of us in order to bring us redemption and the hope of an eternal, utopian kingdom to end all kingdoms. What love. He *had to be* eternal, too, in order to fulfill the eternal nature of the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 89:34-36; Jeremiah 33:22, 25-26). To read the New Testament is to realize that Jesus was, in fact, this eternal God:

- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God (John 1).
- ¹⁶ For in him ¹ were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Colossians 1).
- ⁵ Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began (John 17).

You can't read through the New Testament and not readily and easily see how the son of Mary and Joseph was the eternal Son of God, and because He is the eternal Son He is more than capable of bringing peace, not only to you and your soul, but peace to this old, sin-battered, weary world. Another senseless, brutal massacre this week ... this time in the Los Angeles area ... reminds us

² Charles Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1982), 173.

just how fragile life is how wicked and evil our world is, and how inept world leaders are at bringing peace to the planet. Our sin solution is faith in the eternal God born to become the king and the shepherd over the lives of the believing, and one day to be king and shepherd over the entire world at the end of time. The facts are in. He was born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. He demonstrated His deity through His miraculous powers, He bore our sin on the cross, and He defeated sin and death by His glorious resurrection, which is, again, only a feat God could pull off. The question this Christmas is clear, “Are you ready to place your faith in this divine Messiah?”

As you are thinking about your personal response to that question, we need to dig a little further into the facts supporting the reasons why you should have faith in Jesus.

Faith In The Realization Of Prophecy

Fulfilled prophecy causes the Bible to stand head and shoulders above all other religions books. In fact, the fulfilled prophecies are so exact, so precise there is no way they could have been given and realized other than the living God disclosed them to the prophets of old. God speaks of His prophetic ability, as revealed through Isaiah’s inspired pen, as the benchmark which sets apart true and false belief. In a challenging fashion to all false religions, God booms:

“Behold, the former things have come to pass, Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim *them* to you” (Isaiah 42).

“¹² It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, and there was no strange *god* among you; So you are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And I am God” (Isaiah 43).

“²⁶ Confirming the word of His servant and performing the purpose of His messengers. *It is I* who says of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be inhabited!’ And of the cities of Judah, ‘They shall be built.’ And I will raise up her ruins *again* (Isaiah 44).”

God taunts and mocks those who’d dare trust in false gods and/or become enmeshed in false religious systems because their inability to foretell the future with precision demonstrates their faulty, limited manishness. His prophets, on the other hand, like Isaiah, have God-given ability to foretell the future with complete exactness. Permitting Isaiah to disclose the name of Cyrus, King of Persia, some 150 years before his birth (Isaiah 44:24-45:8), as the one who’d deliver Judah from exile underscores God’s lofty and ominous uniqueness.

Some of God’s greatest prophecies don’t concern the nations, but the coming of His Son and the Messiah, Jesus. Rene Pache, the French scholar, estimates there are 333 exact prophecies in the Old Testament which were fulfilled in the coming of Jesus, prophecies that Christ could not humanly control in order to make himself appear as the Messiah. After looking at the number of these prophecies, the good professor stopped and crunched the numbers from a probability standpoint. His findings? “... there would be one chance out of 83 billion that so

many predictions would come true in the case of one single individual.”³ To this he adds, “Needless to say, such a ‘chance’ does not exist, and no one but the omniscient God could predict and act like this.”⁴ No doubt. Talk about hard, fast facts. Biblical faith is based on this type of solid, testable foundation.

Josh MacDowell presents sixty-one exact prophecies about the Messiah in his book *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*. All a thinking mind needs to do is read these prophecies and see their complete fulfillment in Jesus, in some cases thousands of years after their articulation, and many of them hundreds of years after the fact. Again, only the living God could pull this off given all the changing variables over such a large swath of time. Let’s flip through some of the prophecies, stopping to make some much needed notations along the way.

- Genesis 3:15; ¹⁵ “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.” Speaking judgmentally to Satan here post-fall, God prophesied that a constant spiritual skirmish would occur between those who side with Satan (John 8:44; Ephesians 2:1-3) versus those who side with God, culminating in Satan bruising the coming Seed, the Messiah on the heel (at the crucifixion), and the Seed dealing a deadly head blow to the sinister, ruthless Serpent. Eve wrongly thought that Cain, her firstborn, was this seed (Genesis 4:1); however, his murder of his brother, Abel over how one should approach and worship the living, holy God (Genesis 4:1ff), clearly demonstrates the spiritual skirmish was on. To read through the Old Testament is to see this battle between Satan’s followers and the messianic seed unfold and flare up on a constant, unrelenting basis. Satan had no idea when this Seed would be born, so he worked overtime from man’s fall in the Garden to eliminate the chosen line as revealed (viz., Athaliah’s murder of her Davidic grandsons, 2 Kings 11:1f), going so far as to moving Herod the Great to kill all the two-year-old males in Bethlehem in his blood-thirsty quest to defeat God (Matthew 2:16), over-throw the ancient prophecy, and thereby make himself god. He didn’t win, nor did he stop the birth of the Seed to the woman, Mary. The angel’s words to Joseph underscore the fact that the Seed had now become flesh, as prophesied: Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her” (Matthew 1).
- Genesis 49:10; “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him *shall be* the obedience of the peoples.” How interesting. Judah, the son who sold his brother, Joseph, into slavery and who attempted to defraud his daughter-in-law, found divine grace when his father, Jacob, pronounced prophetic blessings on the sons, who later composed the twelve tribes of Israel. Such are the ways of God. He specializes in using broken, dysfunctional, baggage-ridden people to accomplish some of His greatest, most monumental works, even tweaked

³ Rene Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 283).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 283.

people like Judah. The prophecy here is powerful. The Bible Knowledge Commentary, composed by various skilled professors from Dallas Theological Seminary, gives us good insight into this prophecy:

“The NASB renders the third line of Genesis 49:10, “Until Shiloh comes.” Many sources, including the Targum (Aram. paraphrase of the OT), see “Shiloh” as a title of the Messiah. However, the Hebrew word *šilōh* should be rendered “whose it is,” that is, **the scepter will not depart from Judah ... until He comes** whose it (i.e., the scepter) is (or as the NIV puts it, **to whom it belongs**). Similar words in Ezekiel 21:27, “until He comes to whom it (the crown, Ezek. 21:26) rightfully belongs” were addressed to the last king of Judah. With the coming of Messiah there will be paradise-like splendor. Kidner says that every line of Genesis 49:11–12 “speaks of exuberant, intoxicating abundance: it is the golden age of the Coming One, whose universal rule was glimpsed in [v.] 10c” (*Genesis*, p. 219). For Judah, grapevines will be so abundant that they will be used for hitching posts; **wine** will be as abundant as wash water. In Judah, people’s eyes will be red or bright from **wine** and their **teeth** will be white from drinking much **milk**. These are picturesque ways of describing the suitability of Judah’s territory for vineyards. Such opulence will be evident in the Millennium (Isa. 61:6–7; 65:21–25; Zech. 3:10).”⁵

Matthew makes sure we know Jesus is directly related to the tribe of Judah in the messianic genealogical list in the first chapter of his evangelistic presentation of Jesus as the Christ to his countrymen (Matthew 1:2, 3). Matthew also tells us that even the godless, self-worshipping Jewish chief priests and scribes knew the Messiah would be a ruler born to the tribe of Judah ... some 1,401 years after Moses wrote these divinely inspired words in Genesis (Matthew 2:3-6: “³ When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: ⁶ ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of **Judah**, are by no means least among the rulers of **Judah**, since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel!’” (Matthew 2).

John closes out the New Testament with the book of Revelation. In the fifth chapter he, too, equates Jesus, the coming King, with the tribe of Judah: Revelation 5: “⁵ One of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. The lion of the tribe of **Judah**, the root of David, ¹ has triumphed, enabling him to open the scroll with its seven seals.”

Let me ask you, what’s the probability that one man could control the tribe of his birth? Jesus didn’t just happen to be born to this particular tribe. No, He

⁵ Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 98-99.

had to be born to this tribe in order to be the Seed, the Savior, and the King. Those are the cold, hard facts which should cause one to relish in the substantial nature of their faith, or to begin to ponder the reasons to believe in Christ in the first place.

- Isaiah 11: “¹But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. ² The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD, ³ and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, ⁴ But he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. ⁵ Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. ⁶ ¹ Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; The calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall be neighbors, together their young shall rest; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. ⁸ The baby shall play by the cobra's den, and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair. ⁹ There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD, as water covers the sea. ¹⁰ On that day, the root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, The Gentiles shall seek out, for his dwelling shall be glorious.”

We don't have time to exegete this entire magnificent section, so permit me to just offer some salient, short observations.

Historically, Isaiah gives the nation hope in light of their coming destruction, a time of national conflagration which would appear to wipe out the Davidic dynasty, thereby destroying all hopes of an eternal empire of universal peace and holiness as promised by God (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 89:3-4; Jeremiah 33:22-26). God prophesied that a small, full-of-life shoot would eventually rise out of the stump of the Davidic Empire. That shoot would be none other than the Messiah who would come specifically from the Davidic line of Jesse (Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15). And this Messiah would be no ordinary man/ruler either. The characteristics of the Holy Spirit would permeate His life and ruler, more than any other leader to ever walk the planet. Oh, how our wicked, degenerate, power-hungry, sin-loving world needs this ruler. His life will be known for its godly, holy wisdom and He will walk in a complete fear of the Father, God. His reign will be known also for complete justice, something our self-righteous, narcissistic leaders don't seem capable of bringing to us. When he reigns, which is still future, sin will be removed, resulting in vicious animals being tame and non-flesh eating. Also, at that time, which is still future, the knowledge of God as the true and living God, will fill the planet. No longer will anyone worship any other false god or false religion. They will only worship the Messiah, God with us.

And which family line within the tribe of Judah will He come from? He will originate specifically in the line of Jesse, which is the line of David ... the prototype of the greater Davidic King, Jesus, the Christ. Dr. Luke wastes no time in the third chapter of his book tying Jesus to Jesse, and for good reason (Luke 3:23, 32). Matthew gets in on the exciting action too (Matthew 1:5-6).

Once more I must ask you, what is the probability Jesus just happened to be born to the right family line within the right tribe among twelve tribes? Was He just really lucky? No. God, the Father, carefully and strategically guided the birth of Jesus by controlling all the complex, ever-changing variables in countless personal and geo-political situations to make sure Jesus' birth was to the right tribe and the right family so He could be the true Messiah. Again, those are the historical, unchanging, set-in-stone facts, facts which should buttress your faith or move you to consider the reason to believe in the person and work of Jesus.

Commenting on C.S. Lewis' unique ability to use reason to guide one toward God, Alister McGrath cogently remarks:

Lewis's great achievement, according to Farrer, was to demonstrate the reasonableness of faith in a way that facilitated its cultural acceptance. Though argument does not create conviction, the lack of it destroys belief. What seems to be proved may not be embraced; but what no one shows the ability to defend is quickly abandoned. Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish. To demonstrate the reasonableness of faith does not mean proving every article of faith. Rather, it means being able to demonstrate that there are good grounds for believing these articles are trustworthy and reliable—for example, by showing that the Christian faith makes sense of what we observe and experience. The Christian faith can thus be compared to a lens that brings things into focus, or a light that allows us to see farther and more clearly than we can manage on our own.⁶

What I've given you today is just a small, short sampling of sixty-one prophecies Jesus fulfilled to the letter, and by so doing we are given the reasonable nature of Christian faith. God, who created our minds, doesn't want us to check them at the door as we enter worship. On the contrary, He wants us to use the evidence supplied to see the reasonable nature of faith and then to take that faith step toward Him which ushers you into His eternal family. MacDowell comments that the statistical probability of one man fulfilling just forty-eight of these prophecies is 10^{157} . That's 10 with a whole lot of zeros after it, meaning there is no way on earth that Jesus could have just happened to fulfill all these prophetic words. No, He had to be the fulfillment of all of them because He was, and is, the Messiah.

⁶ Alister E. McGrath, *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 79.

The question now is clear: What will you do with the incontrovertible evidence concerning the person and work of Jesus? And if you are already a Christ-follower, may these truths, these facts serve to buttress your faith and move you to share your faith this Christmas.

I'll leave you with a challenging story.

Billy Graham is now 96 years-old and has Parkinson's disease. In January of 2014 leaders in Charlotte, North Carolina, invited their favorite son, Billy Graham, to a luncheon in his honor. Billy initially hesitated to accept the invitation because he struggles with Parkinson's disease. But the Charlotte leaders said, 'We don't expect a major address. Just come and let us honor you.' so he agreed.

After wonderful things were said about him, Dr. Graham stepped to the rostrum, looked at the crowd, and said: "I'm reminded today of Albert Einstein, the great physicist who this month has been honored by Time magazine as the Man of the Century. Einstein was once traveling from Princeton on a train, when the conductor came down the aisle, punching the tickets of every passenger. When he came to Einstein, Einstein reached in his vest pocket.

He couldn't find his ticket, so he reached in his trouser pockets. It wasn't there. He looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked in the seat beside him. He still couldn't find it. "The conductor said, 'Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. We all know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it. "Einstein nodded appreciatively. The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets.

As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist down on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket. "The conductor rushed back and said, 'Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry, I know who you are; no problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one.' Einstein looked at him and said, "Young man, I too, know who I am. What I don't know is where I'm going."

Having said that Billy Graham continued, "See the suit I'm wearing? It's a brand new suit. My children, and my grandchildren are telling me I've gotten a little slovenly in my old age. I used to be a bit more fastidious. So I went out and bought a new suit for this luncheon and one more occasion. You know what that occasion is? This is the suit in which I'll be buried. But when you hear I'm dead, I don't want you to immediately remember the suit I'm wearing. I want you to remember this: "I not only know who I am. I also know where I'm going."

Ol' Billy is a wise man because years ago he placed his faith in the facts of the Christmas story. Now, it is your turn.