

*Wonder Of Wonders*  
Series: Advent 2009, #3  
Lyle L. Wahl  
December 13, 2009

## Introduction

Jesus, *Wonder of Wonders*. There are many wonders—many wonderfully beautiful, amazing, intricate, astonishing and marvelous things. The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World was the first known list of amazing human works. Since then there have been many other lists of *great wonders*.

- There are various lists of wonders of the Middle Ages.
- There are many lists of wonders of the modern age, of both natural and human works. Some lists have been compiled by travelers, others by professionals or scholars in different fields, and yet others by news organizations and as public relations efforts.

One example is the list of the Seven Wonders of Canada.<sup>1</sup> In 2007 the CBC held a competition to pick the seven greatest wonders in Canada. Listeners and viewers made nominations which were pared down to a short list by on-line voting. From this list a panel of three judges picked the *Seven Wonders of Canada* based on geographic and poetic criteria. Their list includes:

- a few basic things such as the canoe and igloo;
- the natural wonders of Niagra Falls, the Rockies and the Prairie Skies;
- then Old Quebec and Pier 21 in Halifax.

Interestingly, the panel only picked two from the top seven chosen by the voting public, Niagra Falls and the Rockies. The short list of 40 included some interesting choices, such as the Vegreville Egg, the Alberta town's 25' by 18' aluminum-shelled Ukranian Easter Egg.

Whatever you think about any ancient and modern *wonders*, Jesus surpasses them all. He is the *Wonder of Wonders*. Let's explore that together. We begin with eyewitness reactions, the...

## The Testimony Of People Who Saw And Heard Jesus.

Consider some examples. The natural place to start is with Mary and Joseph. Before Jesus was born an angel told Mary, and then Joseph, that she would conceive through the Holy Spirit and give birth to the long-awaited Savior (Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25). When Mary then went to see Elizabeth, Elizabeth's first words to her were,

“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!  
And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would  
come to me?” (Luke 1:42-43).

The very night Jesus was born a group of shepherds came to find and worship this One an angel told them was the Savior.

Mary “treasured” these amazing, wonderful things, and kept carefully thinking about them (Luke 2:19). Again, when they took Jesus to the Temple when He was about a month old and heard a man they did not know named Simeon declare that Jesus is God’s Savior, Mary and Joseph were amazed (Luke 2:33).

Let’s push the circle out a bit to the people in the town where Jesus grew up. After Jesus began His public ministry, He came home and taught in their synagogue. Matthew tells us the people “were astonished, and said, ‘Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers’” (Matthew 13:54). Even though they took offense at Him and refused to believe He was the Messiah, they recognized that He, His teaching and works were astounding (13:57-58).

Time after time the gospels tell us that the disciples, Jesus’ hand-picked men, also were “astonished”, “amazed”, “utterly astonished” at what Jesus said and did (e.g., Matthew 8:27; 19:25; Mark 6:51, etc.). The crowds who often gathered by the thousands to hear Jesus teach and see Him heal people were amazed. They said to each other, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel” (Matthew 9:33). They were awestruck by His teaching with authority, commanding demons to leave and performing miracles (e.g., Matthew 7:28-29; Mark 1:27; Luke 4:32; 9:32 etc.)

Then there were the religious leaders who, by and large, rejected Him and actively plotted to kill Him. They were amazed when Jesus eluded their carefully constructed word traps with clear, irrefutable answers. They were astounded and often quietly slipped away (cf. Matthew 22:22; Luke 20:26). Pilate, the Roman governor, was “quite amazed” that Jesus calmly did not debate or defend Himself against the accusations of the chief priests and elders (Matthew 27:14; Mark 15:5). Even the tough officer, the Centurion who headed the detail supervising Jesus’ crucifixion, said, “Truly this was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:54; Mark 15:39).

While we have seen some hints, let’s explore why all these people were so amazed at Jesus. The thing the gospels most frequently tell us that amazed everyone about Jesus was His teaching. As Mark 6 tells us, “... the many listeners were astonished, saying, ‘Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him ...’” (2). People were so amazed at His teaching they that had to ask “Where did He, how did He get such wisdom?” (cf. also Matthew 13:54; Mark 6:2). The religious leaders also “were astonished, saying, ‘How has this man become learned, having never been educated?’” (John 7:15). They had spent years studying under great master teachers to get their knowledge, credentials and positions, but Jesus did not.

Next in frequency, the gospels tell us the people were amazed by the miracles Jesus performed. When Jesus calmed the stormy sea, saving His disciples from what they thought was certain death, they “were amazed and said, ‘What kind of man is this, that even the winds and sea obey Him?’” (Matthew 8:27).

When Jesus cast out a demon and healed a blind and mute man so that he saw and spoke, “all the crowds were amazed, and were saying, ‘This man cannot be the Son of David [the Messiah], can He?’” (Matthew 12:23). Again, when Jesus healed the paralytic whose friends dug through the roof in order to let him down so he could get to Jesus, the tightly packed crowd “were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, ‘We have never seen anything like this.’” (Mark 2:1-12).

Mark gives us a good overall summary in chapter 9 of his gospel. Jesus had taken Peter, James and John with Him to a mountain where He was transfigured before them and God declared in an audible voice, “This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!” (8). When the four returned to the larger group of disciples, there was a large crowd around them. Mark tells us, “Immediately, when the entire crowd saw [Jesus], they were amazed and began running up to greet Him” (15).

Whether they believed in Him or rejected Him, the testimony of people who saw and heard Jesus was consistent—Jesus was amazing. Yes, they took great pride in “Father Abraham,” King David and Solomon and some of the prophets, but there never had been anyone like Jesus. He is the *Wonder of Wonders*.

We need to take this farther than the testimony of people who saw and heard Jesus, as valuable as that is. After all, we don’t always see or interpret things with 100% accuracy. You probably did not hear one detail about young Leif Arthur Hanson’s entry into this world back on November 20<sup>th</sup>. When Tabitha told Tyler it was time to go to the hospital, they got in the van and he put the pedal to the metal. As he shot past the Admitting/Emergency entrance, Tabitha shouted “Tyler, *that’s* where we are supposed to go!” Pumped with adrenalin, he replied, “No, Dear. I saw a sign that said ‘All Deliveries In the Rear Of The Building!’”<sup>2</sup> Okay, that really didn’t happen... at least to the best of my knowledge.

We do need to look beyond the first hand testimony, beyond people’s views of others and events. In this case, their testimony is in the Bible, which assures us that the statements are accurate. Even so, we need to look at...

### **The Facts Of Who Jesus Is And What He Accomplished.**

This subject is both critical and extensive. With that in mind, think briefly of just two facts which verify that Jesus is the *Wonder of Wonders*. First, Jesus Christ is Immanuel. Immanuel, meaning “God with us.” A wonder beyond our ability to comprehend. God the Son became one of us, Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man.

The prophecy came through Isaiah,

“the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” (7:14)

The Bible declares it was fulfilled in Jesus. The angel God sent to Joseph told him that

“the Child who has been conceived in [Mary] is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” (20b-21)

Matthew goes on to tell us,

“Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘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.’” (22-23)

So John’s gospel declares,

“the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (1:14)

C. S. Lewis described the importance of the truth this way,

“The Christian story is precisely the story of one grand miracle, the Christian assertion being that what is beyond all space and time, what is uncreated, eternal, came into nature, into human nature, descended into His own universe, and rose again, bringing nature up with Him. It is precisely one great miracle. If you take that away there is nothing specifically Christian left.”

God the Son not only became one *of* us, He also is *with* us, with every believer. He is with us through the Holy Spirit He has given to us. John 14 beginning at verse 16,

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” (16-20)

He is with us always, even when life does not go as we think it should. Remember His statement at the end of Matthew’s gospel, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (28:20). As the writer of Hebrews tells us to be content with what we have, he reminds us that God has told us “‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,” so that we can confidently say, ‘The LORD is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?’” (13:5-6).

Even with these promises, we can be upset when life does not go as we think it should. Have you ever dug in your heels and, in effect if not outright, demanded that God change things? In his book *The Applause Of Heaven*, published ten years ago, Max Lucado wrote,

“Some time ago, I took my family to the bicycle store to purchase a bike for five-year-old Jenna. She picked out a shiny ‘Starlett’ with a banana seat and training wheels. And Andrea, age three, decided she wanted one as well.

‘I explained to Andrea that she was too young. I told her she was still having trouble with a tricycle and was too small for a two-wheeler. No luck; she still wanted a bike. I explained to her that when she was a bit older, she would get a bike, too. She just stared at me. I tried to tell her that a big bike would bring her more pain than pleasure, more scrapes than thrills. She turned her head and said nothing.

“Finally I sighed and said this time her daddy knew best. Her response? She screamed it loud enough for everyone in the store to hear: ‘Then I want a *new* daddy!’”<sup>4</sup>

We can feel like that three year-old at times. No matter what the circumstances or how we feel about them, we can rely on Jesus to fulfill God’s promise,

“Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not look anxiously about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”  
(Isaiah 41:10)

We can rely on the truth that

“neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(Romans 8:38-39)

We also know that Jesus will be with us and we will be with Him for eternity. God gave the apostle John a number of wonderful visions of things to come. At the close of the Revelation he tells us,

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell

among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’ And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ And He said, ‘Write, for these words are faithful and true.’” (20:1-5)

Jesus Christ is the *Wonder of Wonders* because He is Immanuel, God with us.

The second fact is that Jesus Christ has provided salvation. First, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit planned our salvation in eternity, before time as we know it began. We read in Ephesians 1,

“He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.” (4-6)

Our salvation was not an after thought. Adam plunging the human family into sin did not surprise God. The salvation of people from sin and death to holiness and life was planned by God.

Then, we know, Christ provided salvation in time. Not just in time, or at any time, certainly not at a random time, but exactly at the time God purposed as He works all things for His own glory. The apostle Paul wrote,

“when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” (Galatians 4:4-5)

Christ gives this salvation to all who will receive it. Romans 6:23 succinctly summarizes our need and Christ’s provision, “the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” And Ephesians 2 makes it clear that Christ gives salvation as a gift to those who place their trust in Him, not as a reward for diligent, sincere works.

“By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (8-9)

Christ planned and provided our salvation, He gives it as a free gift and He also guarantees it... forever. He establishes us and seals us for Himself forever with the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 4:30). The end is just as certain as the beginning. Romans 8:28 is frequently lifted out of its setting, but look at it now in that

setting which defines its meaning.

“We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

(Romans 8:28-30)

## **Conclusion.**

Yes, the Bible, God’s true, unerring word to us, tells us that Jesus is the *Wonder of Wonders*. The point for each of us today is “Do I acknowledge Jesus Christ, Immanuel, as the *Wonder of Wonders*?” Then, “Does He really top my list as the most amazing, astounding, awe-inspiring One?”

It is easy for us to demote Christ during this busy season—no, not consciously, not in a way we would admit or perhaps even recognize. Our over-booked schedules and frantic pace can do that. There is a story about...

a woman who was frantically running from store to store trying to finish her last minute Christmas shopping. Suddenly she realized her three year-old son was no longer holding on to her hand. Panicked, she retraced her steps and found him standing with his nose pressed against a frosty window. He was looking at a manger scene.

Responding to his mother’s near-hysterical call, he turned to her and excitedly shouted back, “Look mommy! It’s baby Jesus in the hay!” Relieved she had found him and impatient to complete her shopping list, she jerked him away from the window saying, “We don’t have time for that!”<sup>5</sup>

As you now reflect on Jesus the *Wonder of Wonders*, thank God for His indescribable gift of Jesus Christ. Then make sure that He really tops your list not only during this Christmas season, but every day.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Seven Wonders of Canada*. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven\\_Wonders\\_of\\_Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Wonders_of_Canada)>. Accessed 08 December 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from an illustration on <<http://www.expositor.com/Season1.htm>> cited as coming from Robin Greenspan, "Lite Fair," *Christian Reader*. Accessed 09 December 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis, C.S. "The Grand Miracle," *God In The Dock*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970, p. 80.

<sup>4</sup> Lucado, Max. *The Applause Of Heaven*. Nashville: Word Publishing, 1999, pp. 167-8.

<sup>5</sup> Slightly adapted from a story in a message by Glenn Pease, *The Wonder Of Christmas*. <<http://www.scribd.com/doc/22156892/THE-WONDER-OF-CHRISTMAS>>. Accessed 10 December 2009.

© 2009 Lyle L. Wahl

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®,  
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995  
by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.