

Glory to God in the highest

By Judith MacNutt

And again, when God brings His firstborn into the world, He says, "Let all God's angels worship Him." In speaking of the angels, He says, "He makes His angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire." (Hebrews 1:6-7)

The archangel Gabriel was entrusted with the greatest message of all time, given to a young virgin named Mary in the small village of Nazareth in Galilee. This message would radically change the course of human history.

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call Him Jesus. He will be great and will be



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR
Judith MacNutt.

called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." (Luke 1:26-33)

When Jesus was conceived, He became God Incarnate. The second Person of the Trinity became flesh in Mary's womb, miraculously conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the Incarnation the divine nature of the Son (while remaining God) was seen as being united with human nature in one

divine person. From the time of His conception, Jesus was both fully man and fully God. His birth by a virgin is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies about the salvation of the world. Emmanuel: God with us!

When I reread the familiar account of Jesus' birth, I am struck by the way the sovereign hand of God orchestrated each event to provide safety for His Son. God's plan would not be altered by the law, by the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus, nor by Satan, the evil one.

At that moment in history the entire angelic realm must have been on high alert. Every movement, every threat was monitored by the angels' watchful protection. Warring angels under assignment from the archangel Michael battled the demonic forces attempting to threaten the life of the unborn Jesus.

When Jesus was born, it was an angel of God who proclaimed the glorious good news. God chose lowly shepherds, tending their sheep in the fields near Bethlehem, to hear the most magnificent, triumphant announcement of all times: the

Savior of the world had been born! These uneducated, simple shepherds received the message that would forever after change human destiny.

The shepherds were terrified as the glory of God filled the skies. But the angel reassured them and said: "I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:10-12)

Before the shepherds could even react, the entire blackened sky split open with the brilliant, blinding light of heaven. Then the voice of the angel was multiplied a thousand times over.

As their eyes focused, the shepherds realized the dazzling light was the brilliance of the shining angels who filled the entire sky, thousands upon thousands praising God, unable to contain their overwhelming joy!

Luke describes it: "Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory

to God in the highest, and on earth peace to [those] on whom His favor rests'" (Luke 2:13-14).

I hope you enjoyed this short excerpt from my book *Encountering Angels*. The birth of Jesus remains the greatest gift of love of all time. May you and yours experience the same joy and wonder that the angels proclaimed on that first Christmas.

For more than 30 years, Judith MacNutt, alongside her husband Francis, has been one of the most recognized and respected leaders in the healing ministry. They are co-founders of Christian Healing Ministries, Inc. (Jacksonville, FL.), a Christ-centered, ecumenical and non-profit ministry that is dedicated to the practice and teaching of healing prayer. Francis and Judith have traveled the world teaching about the love of Jesus Christ and the power and effectiveness of healing prayer. Together they have authored more than 10 books. For more information about Christian Healing Ministries, please visit their website at christianhealingmin.org or ring them at (907) 765-3332.

Believe



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR
Debbie Martinez.

By Debra Martinez

How are you going to enter into the New Year? Are you walking into it carrying all your old burdens and

hanging onto lost dreams? If so, how can God give you new blessings if you continue to live in the past? This is a season of birth, hope and promises. Leave the pain of broken human promises and believe in God's promises for you instead. Be grateful for this present day and the future plans He has for you. In 2018, claim and believe these promises over yourself daily and step into your future confidently because God is already there waiting for you.

I Believe God has only good in my future: "For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

I Believe my life is ahead of me and not behind: "Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you." (Proverbs 25)

I Believe I am safe and secure: "The Lord will fight for you, and you can be still." (Exodus 14:14)

I Believe my best years are now and in the future: "But forget all that —

it is nothing compared to what I am going to do." (Isaiah 43:18)

I Believe I am a warrior: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10)

I Believe that I have forgiven those that hurt me: "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Hebrews 8:12)

I Believe all doors of opportunity are open for me: "I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut." (Revelation 3:8)

I Believe that I no longer worry: "The Lord is greater than the giants you face." (1 John 4:4)

I Believe I have walked into tremendous favor: "God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Ephesians 3:20)

Make the commitment to yourself that this is the year you shift your thinking from anger and hurt to thoughts of peace and hope. Don't just accept your new circumstances

but learn to embrace them. Ask God to show you the lessons He wants you to learn and the path He wants you to take. Lean on Him daily for direction and strength and I promise you, you will walk into a bright future.

Divorce itself does not define you. How you navigate it and what you do with your life afterwards does. Choose to make 2018 a year of hope and healing.

Debbie Martinez is a certified Mindful Life Coach specializing in divorce, a Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator, Florida Supreme Court Qualified Arbitrator, Parent Coordinator and trained in Collaborative Divorce both in Florida and South Carolina; she also writes for The Florida Villager and is a contributor to The Huffington Post. She may be reached via Debbie@transformationthrudivorce.com and her website is www.transformationthrudivorce.com.

Museum, cont.

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The Gutenberg Bible of the 1450s was first large scale printed version. The Bible is credited with being the most widely printed and distributed book in the world. According to *Guinness Book of World Records*,

the whole Bible has been translated into 349 languages with at least one book of the Bible translated into more than 2000 languages. According to the various Bible societies and scholars, that amounts to more than 7 Billion copies worldwide.

Regardless of what you believe, the

Bible is history and it is about history. It is not only essential to understanding Judaism and Christianity; it is vital to understanding Western culture. It is also the corner stone of the ethics and morals individuals and leaders have used for time immemorial. Those precepts still guide un-told billions. That is but a sample of the Bible's worldwide impact on peoples and their civilizations.

The Bible's influence in America's development is profound. The Pilgrims and Puritans often cited Isaiah 33:32 as providing their guidance in the new found land: "For the Lord is our judge, their Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; it is he who will save us." The Founding Fathers sought guidance and comfort in its scripture. George Washington was known to quote scripture. One apt quote is from 1 Timothy 2: 1-2: "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence." There are many such quotes and references to the Bible as well as associated documents that can be found in the Museum. Not surprisingly, there is evidence that the Bible was revered and carried by settlers as they spread out across the breadth and depth of the new nation.

The McKinneys observed that various exhibits point out how the Bible had an impact on nearly all aspects of American life such as the practice of medicine, the construct of social justice and more. As a basis for education, American children prayed and read the Bible in schools for 355 years — from 1607 until 1962. Despite that practice being ended by secularists, many children still read and study the Bible regularly. Casual readers have taken it up for the history it covers, while others have

read it and joined the Christian faith. The Green family decided that more people should be able to learn about it or refresh their memories of what they might have read some time ago. In fact, the Museum website states it will be an "educational institution whose purpose is to invite all people to engage with the history, narrative and impact of the Bible."

In 2012 the American Bible Society found that 85 percent of American households owned at least one Bible with most owning an average of 4.3 Bibles. The Society's survey also found that the majority of Americans (69 percent) believe the Bible provides answers on how to live a meaningful life.

Even a brief tour through the website will help anyone gain a greater appreciation for this remarkable book. Most of what you will see is mainly on three floors. Each covers a specific area — History, Narrative and Impact. Then there is a roof top garden, a Biblical garden and a cafe where you can see much of Washington through the large, curved glass panels.

The McKinneys' comment on the overwhelming cornucopia of information is that if you travel to Washington to tour the building, you will need nine eight-hour days to see all of the exhibits.

Think of that. Think of what can be learned by spending even a relatively small amount of time in such a welcoming venue so rich in history and culture. The McKinney's immediately decided they must return to see more. They intend to take their children and grandchildren (there are special exhibits and rooms oriented toward children). This is clearly a remarkable accomplishment that will help millions of people for years to come. It is obviously well worth seeing first hand



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This month's speaker:
Todd Brown