

In a World of Distraction, Keep Christ at the Center of Christmas

SATURDAY, December 06, 2025 at 8:00am CT

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

In a world of distraction, keep Christ at the center of Christmas. That is a topic we'll discuss today right here on the Christian Worldview Radio program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians, and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a nonprofit, listener supported radio ministry. You can connect with us by visiting our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, and the rest of our contact information will be given throughout today's program. As always, thank you for your notes of encouragement, financial support, and lifting us up in prayer.

As we approach Christmas, a date that has been traditionally set aside to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, it's remarkable to observe just how little all the hubbub around the "holidays" reflects this historic reason for the season. Blow up Santa's adorn yards, ubiquitous ads in print and on television entice purchasing endless things, and background music in stores croons about snowflakes, frosty and jingle bells.

The obvious truth is this. The God of this world with a little g has successfully distracted and deceived society from focusing on the Christ of Christmas. At the same time, national and world events draw our attention. Heated debates over politicians and their policies, the cost of living, taxation, normalization of sexual sin, abortion, Islamic immigration, deportation of illegal immigrants, support of Israel, and the list goes on.

Well, God designed us with the capacity to consider many different issues each day. One issue needs to be our top priority that "God has sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him." And this is love. Not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. That's from First John chapter four. Grant Castleberry, pastor of the King's Chapel in Raleigh, North Carolina, joins us today on The Christian worldview to help us avoid the distractions and keep Christ at the center of this Christmas season.

A former captain in the US Marine Corps, Grant, along with his wife, Grace Anna, are the authors of *Manger in Danger*, an excellent Gospel-centered 25-day devotional for families with children. We'll tell you how you can order that today. Grant will also explain how nations with a Christian heritage like England and the United States have diverted from Christmas and the faith, become secularized, and even welcomed Islamic immigration in the name of the false god of multiculturalism.

Let's get straight to the interview with Pastor Grant Castleberry. Grant, it's great to have you back on The Christian Worldview radio program. Back in October of 2024 was the last time we talked on the program. And since then, you've had quite a bit going on in your life and in your ministry. I read on your website earlier this year in May, quote, the members of Capital Community Church, which you're pastor of, and Christ Baptist

Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, overwhelmingly voted to form a new church together. Now, this is somewhat unusual. You don't hear of churches merging that often. What is the story behind this merger?

GUEST: GRANT CASTLEBERRY:

It's amazing how God is directing our steps, how Christ is building this church. And the church that I have pastored for six years, Capital Community Church had really grown to the point where we had outgrown our facilities. We started meeting in a middle school, so we had definitive needs, and then, Christ Baptist Church had a large building, and no pastor, and there weren't as many young families in the Christ Baptist congregation. So, as the Lord would have it, I think both congregations, over a period of a couple of years, saw in each other ways that we could be better together than we were apart. So, really the Lord did this. I went to lunch today with a gentleman who had been in Christ Baptist, and we were just reflecting on all that the Lord has done over the past two years. And really, this was the Lord's sovereign hand in bringing the two churches together, because I could have never done it in my own strength and in my own ingenuity.

You know they don't teach a class on how to do a merger and seminary and nor should they. It really has to be a work of God to bring two congregations together. But, the Lord has done this, and in May, both congregations voted to become one. And on January 11th, 2026, we are going to have our inauguration Sunday for The King's Chapel. We're already one spiritually, but we just want to have that date there to celebrate and really reflect on all that God has done.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Well, I can imagine that this was more complicated than just appears. Name of the new church is The King's Chapel. We have that linked at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. Now, one other thing, Grant, a major thing that you are just completing is your PhD dissertation on Martin Lloyd Jones. Now, for those listening who don't recognize that name, I'm just going to quote off Got Questions website. They have a summary page on him. "David Martin Lloyd Jones, who was born in 1899 and died, went to heaven in 1981, was a brilliant and successful young British physician. He was a medical doctor who left medicine to become one of the 20th century's most gifted preachers, authors, and theologians. He ministered for 30 years at London's Westminster Congregational Chapel, where many of Britain's cabinet members and leading social figures attended services. With no formal theological training, Lloyd Jones delivered compelling sermons that attracted thousands, and established him as one of the greatest Bible expositors in the English-speaking world."

I think you could say that, at least for the first half of the 20th century, he was the most influential theologically conservative preacher in, let's say, Western civilization at least. Grant, why is it important that everyone listening today knows who Martin Lloyd Jones is? And perhaps you could just give a short biography of his life and ministry.

GUEST: GRANT CASTLEBERRY:

What you just read really sums it up well. I think I would say what Charles Spurgeon was to the 19th century, Martin Lloyd Jones was to the 20th century. Obviously, Spurgeon, great pulpiter, Lloyd Jones, great pulpiter, but both of them stood for truth in the wasteland, so to speak. Spurgeon stands against the

modernistic movement, and is censured by the Baptist denomination, and eventually outvoted 270 something to six or something. Spurgeon stood against the tide, and in many ways, in the 20th century, Lloyd Jones stood against the tide. Early on, you mentioned in the biography, he was a medical doctor who felt called into ministry, and he didn't have formal training. One of the reasons why he didn't pursue formal training is because nearly all of the educational institutions were liberal. He ministered in an age where it was in vogue to deny the inerrancy of scripture, to not necessarily believe in miracles, a physical, bodily resurrection, so on and so forth, but he became convinced of the truth of scripture.

It was like fire in his belly. It burned in his heart that he wanted to preach the Gospel, because as a doctor, he was the chief assistant of Sir Thomas Horder, who was the king's physician at the time. He was in the upper echelon of the medical practice in London, seeing patients on Harley Street. But, what he realized is that man's chief problems couldn't be solved in a doctor's office, because they were spiritual in nature. And the Gospel was the only solution to fix the real problems that people were dealing with. When he was in his 20s, he had grown up in the church, but he realized that he wasn't himself converted. He hadn't been born again. And he came to see himself as a sinner, and he trusted in Christ as his Lord and Savior. And the message of the Gospel gripped him, and how God gives new life. You know that reality of being born again, that was something that really was indicative of his experience.

He had a new experience, and he wanted other people to have that same experience. So, that's really what led him into the Gospel ministry at age 26. And like you said in the bio, he was a brilliant preacher. Even from the onset, he was a powerful preacher, very first sermon. I read his very first sermon. It was a better sermon than many of us will preach at the end of our lives, and God magnificently used him. And one of the ways that he used him, not only is to reach and save so many people in his own generation, and impact so many people, but also to impact pastors, whether it be Eric Alexander in the UK, and then Alistair Begg and Sinclair Ferguson, and then people in America like Warren Wiersbe, and John Piper, Ligon Duncan, John MacArthur, so many of the great preachers now in the 21st century were those who were influenced by Martin Lloyd Jones in the 20th century.

His message is incredibly relevant, and would just encourage all your listeners, go to the Martin Lloyd Jones Trust website. There's also an app, and you can listen to his sermons, and they're just as relevant today as when he first preached them, because his message is so closely tied to the word of God, and I promise you'll be richly blessed.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Yeah, listeners certainly will be. And we would love to have you back on maybe in the new year to talk more about this man. I'm just going to read one more paragraph from that one pager on Martin Lloyd Jones. It says, "His aptitude for Bible exegesis took Westminster Chapel to the forefront of evangelical pulpits in England. He preached 45-minute sermons on Sunday morning directed toward believers, and hour long expositions at night directed toward unbelievers. His Friday evening Bible studies attracted 1,200 people. He taught without interruption for an hour, and many listeners wished he would continue longer. Lloyd Jones was famous for teaching extended verse by verse series like the one on Ephesians, which included 260 sermons on Ephesians. Starting in October of 1954 and lasting until July of 1962. Book of Romans, he spent 12 years

preaching through that book." This is a massive preacher who impacted not only people in his own country, but abroad, as you were saying, Grant.

And we'll look forward to hearing more about him in the future program, because it would be really interesting. I think we could take away a lot from him, and learn more about him as a man as well. Now, speaking of England, Grant, Christianity is vanishing from England, and I don't think that's an overstatement. The Native Englishmen have become very secular, humanistic in their worldview. There has been large scale immigration from Islamic nations and Islamic countries coming into that country, and they are taking over. I think some of the 10 major cities or towns in England now have Muslim mayors, and the number one birth name is Muhammad and so forth. The same thing is occurring in this country, not to the same degree, because our population is much bigger, but we have the same kinds of immigration going on from Islamic countries. We'll get to that in a second.

Now, as we approach Christmas, you can see the example of this in England and also in America. What Christmas has become, and it should be the celebration of Christ's birth, it's become about buying material things. It's become about parties, and football, and decorations, and lights, but not the real reason, the birth of Jesus Christ. You talk about Lloyd Jones, and you talk about Spurgeon, and even in our country, the great preachers that shaped this nation and the worldview of our people. But yet, both countries have migrated away from this Christian ethic to something secular or really multi-religious, synchrontistic. Grant, how did that happen in these two countries that were stalwarts for the Christian faith?

GUEST: GRANT CASTLEBERRY:

You're certainly putting your finger right on the spot, because I think the root issue is secularism, which of course, is based on the Latin word *seculum*, which means this age and secularism in all its forms. There's secular humanism, and different types of breeds of secularism, but all of it deduces that all that is here is what you can see in the here and now. There is no eternity, there is no God, it's all scientific causes for everything, and therefore, all that matters is what you live for in the present, your current happiness. There is no ultimate reality. There is no tell us in which to live for. The only answer I have for that is complacency on the part of the church, and Satan's work of deception in modern England and America. It really is baffling to see in America so many strong believers.

We had the Second Great Awakening not too long ago. And then, in the 20th century there were, not that I agree with every element of their theology, but you had Billy Sunday, and you had Billy Graham, and you had evangelists that were preaching to sold out stadiums, and Madison Square Garden and all these things. But, I think all that time, really secularism was gaining ground, and Christianity was actually on the decline. Now, we come into the 21st century, and we woke up one morning and we found ourselves in the minority. It used to be in the 80s or 90s, it was the moral majority. And that's no longer the case. Really secularism won the day. And with secularism, if you're living for the here and now, not the future, you don't value children. You don't have a Psalm 1:27 worldview that children are a blessing and a heritage from the Lord.

You start having, I don't know if you've heard of this trend called child-free marriages, where couples intentionally do not have children, because they want to pursue their own happiness, and pleasure, and leisure, and travel, so they don't have children. Therefore, the birth rate drops in our country now. As of 2024, it's 1.6 children per woman. You need 2.1 children to sustain a population. And the only answer then to find workers to work the different industries is immigration. You've seen this all across Europe, you've seen it in England, and they opened up the country to the wrong type of immigrants, Muslim immigrants. And I say they're the wrong type, because they come with an agenda. They come with an agenda to take over what they view are infidel societies. That's the word that they used to describe Christians, Jews, really any Westerner, any person who rejects the teaching of Muhammad, they call us infidels and they come with the intention of taking over.

And they are not open to truth, to Western ideas, democracy. They are coming with the intention of really subverting the governance that is already in place. And I think you've seen this happen already in England. And then, of course, the secularists don't have the tools to fight back against it, and they censor people who speak out against the Muslims. I think that's where we are. And it's a tragedy to see this happen in the UK, and I pray it doesn't happen in America.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Don't you wish more pastors would speak with this kind of clarity about Islam? It's not unloving. It's truthful. And the truth sets you free. Grant would be the first to share the gospel with any Muslim, but there's also a national security perspective that needs to be set with regard to whom our nation allows to settle here, not those who want to undermine our constitution and conquer for Islam. Just listen to what this FBI agent has to say about the goal of Islamists.

Audio Sound Bite:

The entire purpose of Islam, according to all Islamic doctrine, is to ensure that there is an Islamic state throughout the entire world called a caliphate. And under that, Sharia or Islamic law is the law of the land. That's it. Islam is no more complicated than that. Islam breaks the entire world into two parts. The Dar al-Islam where Sharia's the law of the land, and the Dar al-Harb, the house or a boat of war where there is not Sharia as the law of the land. The function of Islam is to eliminate the Dar al-Harb until the entire world's a Dar al-Islam. And the vehicle to do that is called what?

Group:

Jihad.

Audio Sound Bite:

Jihad, which in 100% of all published Islamic law is only defined as warfare against non-Muslims.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Western nations are committing national suicide. If they and we continue to allow Islamists in our country and don't deport those who are here with intent to conquer us, just look to Dearborn, Michigan to find out what Islamists in power would be like on a national scale.

Grant, you almost answered my next question there in that last answer, but I want to ask it to you anyway, because I think it's a follow-up on a couple things that have been really prominent in the news. And the first one is this issue of immigration, specifically Muslim immigration, not only to England, but also here in America. New York City just elected a Muslim mayor of the largest city in our country.

Minneapolis, where I live, nearly did. Dearborn, Michigan is a Muslim controlled town. They're making big inroads in Texas, mosques going up everywhere around this country. They're being resettled in small towns around this country. An Afghan refugee brought over here from when America was at war in Afghanistan, brought over, I don't even know how many thousands of refugees in this country, but one of them, I believe, who actually worked for the CIA during that war, just shot two of our national guardsmen in Washington D.C., killing at least one, and I haven't heard what the condition of the other is at this point.

Now, back in 2021, Grant, Russell Moore with Christianity Today, he's the editor-in-chief there, he wrote a column, and I'm just going to read a few sentences from that column in August of 2021, when the US was welcoming or bringing in Afghan immigrants, because purportedly there was going to be great reprisals against those Afghans who had helped the United States during the war in Afghanistan. And he wrote an article entitled, Let the Afghan Refugees Come Unto Me, as if he was quoting Jesus there. He said, "In this global moment, we're called to heed Christ's command to open our hearts and hands." And he went on to say, "As evangelical Christians, we should resolve even before our new neighbors arrive."

Again, this is Afghans coming over, being welcomed into the country. We settled here in 2021, to ignore those who would ask us to fear these refugees. They sometimes, though less often, speak as bluntly as some, are now of refugees as an invasion of those who are coming to "replace us." Perhaps the people, evangelicals, they speak of refugees as a threat. The refugees moving into your community will not be there to terrorize you or to replace you. They will instead be looking for the chance to start a new life without their sons murdered, and their daughters raped by bloodthirsty despots.

In that way, they will be like countless others who have found refuge here in the United States. And then, he goes on and on making a case for why the US should welcome all these Afghan/Islamic immigrants into the United States. And if you go online, and I'm sure you have, you'll see all sorts of people arguing both ways. We see it here in Minneapolis, Grant. We have a very large Somali population here that was brought in purportedly because of war over there, so it needed to be resettled in Minnesota here in the Twin Cities. Not sure why they were resettled here, and not in another Islamic country.

But, that's neither here nor there now because they're here, and they hold political power. You know of Ilhan Omar and others from this area, so there's a very strong position here. But, you'll hear many people say, "Oh,

they've really added to our society, and they're our neighbors, and they're just like any other immigrants, and this country is a nation of immigrants." I'd like to ask you, what is the biblical position on a country like ours who is not majority Muslim on whether we should be bringing in Muslims, even though, granted, a high percentage of them will just give them benefit of the doubt, may want to live here and live peacefully here. But, as you mentioned in your last answer, there are some of them who don't desire that, but they desire to take the Islamic worldview to conquer both politically and religiously. What is the biblical position on this idea of welcoming those of a different religion, Islam, into a historically country that was Christian?

GUEST: GRANT CASTLEBERRY:

As a Marine, I think about translators and people who helped us over in Iraq, and Afghanistan, and served alongside coalition forces, and certainly, some of those guys and their families would be absolutely slaughtered by the Taliban when we pulled out, and some of them were. And so, I think you could make a case for some of those people relocating to America, maybe not becoming citizens and naturalized, but having a place of safety so that they wouldn't be killed. But, my main concern is mass immigration of Muslims to this country. And the reason I say that is because to be a safe Muslim, you have to be an inconsistent Muslim. The Quran teaches that if you kill an infidel, and an infidel is someone who does not believe in Allah, Muhammad, that Muhammad's his prophet, that rejects the Muslim faith, that if you kill an infidel, that you will go to heaven.

If you're a consistent Muslim, you will be a dangerous Muslim, whereas Christianity, if you're a consistent Christian, you're going to be a person of peace. You're going to be a person who turns the other cheek. You're not going to be a person who is an insurrectionist, a terrorist who kills other people in the name of your religion. But, if you're a consistent Muslim, you will be. And our country should have learned its lesson at 9/11. That was an instance of radical Islam waging war against the West. And this is just the plight of secularism is that we have forgotten, or so many people refused to attribute 9/11 to radical Islam, but that's really what it was. And really, the whole post-9/11 war, what we were told as Marines, is that we were going to Iraq to fight the bad guys, and the bad guys, the radical Muslims, were all coming from all over the world into Iraq to fight us there, and better to have that war over there than in America.

And fast-forward 20 years, and now we're just opening up the gates, and allowing all sorts of Muslims to come in, and not all of them ... This is an understatement. Not all of them share our values in terms of tolerance and freedom to worship as you choose. You're seeing the result of that with that terrorist shooting of those two national guardsmen. I'm very concerned that mosques are being built in my home state of Texas. I think national officials need to wake up and understand that Islam is really not congruent with the United States Constitution, and we should not be allowing mosques and other Muslim institutions to be built. I know that might sound extreme to your ears, but I certainly wouldn't want a mosque to be built in my neighborhood.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

No, it's a false religion. And if you value your country, and if you value your neighbor, and your way of life, it goes against all human instinct to bring in those who would really seek to harm you. Again, maybe not all of them will, but there will be enough within the community. You see it time and time again. Let's look at what's

going on in Europe, and there's no reason I didn't believe will be any different here in the United States. Just one more issue in the news, Grant, before we get to some questions about Christmas, and Manger in Danger, and Jesus Christ Himself, about Israel. There has been a big debate on this issue as well. There's a new generation of younger conservatives and younger Christians who do not want the United States to support Israel.

They've seen this war in Gaza, and they're saying they believe Israel is controlling our country. Israel is evil, genocidal. Why should we be helping Israel? They're fine on their own, don't even deserve to be in that land. And as a Christian pastor, how do you respond with this new perspective that even those who are professing Christians have regarding the state of Israel, and the Jews, granted that they are in a state of unbelief and enemies of the Gospel as scripture says at this time. How should we view Israel at this point?

GUEST: GRANT CASTLEBERRY:

I don't think that Americans need to give a tacit endorsement to everything that Israel does. I think what you're seeing is a reaction to forms of Christian Zionism that have said, "We need to support Israel at all costs, and read in Genesis 12, that if we bless Israel, that our country will be blessed," so on and so forth. I think people are reacting against years of that type of foreign policy. That being said, in Romans 11, Paul talks about, and God through Paul, that once the age of the Gentiles is over, that all Israel will be saved. And I take that to mean the same thing that he says in Romans 9:6, that all Israel refers to the majority of Jews. And so, I think what God is doing providentially is bringing so many of the Jews of the world together in that land for a future revival of Jews, and He is going to bring them into the kingdom, and it's going to be an incredible blessing. It's going to be amazing to see. I hope I'm alive to see it.

I think God's doing that. And we know that Satan does not want that to happen, and he's going to use Muslim countries. He controls Islam, and he's going to use everything he can to destroy Israelis, Jews, and I think we're seeing that. I think we, as Americans, not giving tacit endorsement to everything that Israel does, but man, they're our ally in the Middle East against Islam, and we're looking for the day in which so many Jews are eventually going to come to faith in Christ. I strongly reject any antisemitic views that views Jews as our enemy. Paul says they're enemies for the sake of the Gospel, but in terms of election, God will not forget His promises. And so, we're looking forward to the day in which so many of them will come to believe. And that's what I'm praying for, hoping for, looking for.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Well said. Grant Castleberry is our guest today here on The Christian Worldview Radio program. We have links to him at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. He's the pastor of The King's Chapel. And you can also find out more about his ministry at his website, UnashamedTruth.org. And Grant, Israel, as we just discussed, was where Jesus, who was a Jew, was born, and lived, and has promised to return again there. And your devotional, your family devotional is titled *Manger in Danger*. And we featured this last Christmas season. It was very popular, and it is now again this year as well. And so, we just highly recommend it. And I just want to ask you a few questions about it. It's a 25-day devotional as I mentioned. It starts on December 1st, but if you can't get it by then, don't worry, just get it, and you can just do as many days as you can, and have it for next year.

But, it goes through important aspects of Christ's birth and His early life. Even before Christ's birth, 25 days started in the Gospel and Genesis, how the Gospel appeared in Genesis after Adam and Eve fell, the Proto-Evangelion. And then, the second day is hope and prophecy, and you go through Old Testament prophecies. These are short devotionals, mainly for families with younger children where you hide a manger, and they look for the manger, and they get it. Then you read this short devotion. I'll read one here in a second.

But, you go through all different aspects of Christ coming, His birth, and the guiding star, the magi, the gifts of the magi, the escape to Egypt. I'm just ticking off a few of the days. But, I want to just focus on a couple. I picked just two to focus on. One is on day two about is titled Hope and Prophecy, and how the Old Testament had so many prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

I'm just going to read one. Isaiah 7:14 is a well-known one that people will recognize. I see it on Christmas cards all the time. It says, "Therefore, 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 Emmanuel." Now just fast-forward, I think about 700 years now into Matthew, chapter one, now in the New Testament, and we have the angel of the Lord appearing to Joseph in a dream saying that Mary will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus for He will save His people from their sins. Now, all this took place to fulfill, here we go, fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, Isaiah. Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and call His name Emmanuel. These prophecies are beyond just coincidental.

But, as you look at some of the Old Testament prophecies, and how they were fulfilled in the person of Christ, what are one or two of them that when you read, that just cause you to marvel and praise God for how something prophesied hundreds of years earlier came true with the incarnation of Christ?

GUEST: GRANT CASTLEBERRY:

That's funny you asked me this question, because I'm preaching on Sunday on Luke two, the first 20 verses, and it opens up with Caesar Augustus and his census. And you think about this amazing reality, that in the providence of God, this despotic ruler who thinks he's a god, demands a census of the entire known world, sends millions of people to their hometown, their place of birth, all so that God can fulfill Micah 5:2, that the Savior will be born in Bethlehem. It's amazing to see how God and His providence directs all of history to bring about the Redeemer, fulfill the prophecies. And of course, the prophecy that you're referring to, Isaiah chapter nine, where these four amazing titles are given of the future of Messiah, wonderful Counselor. He's a miracle working Counselor, mighty God. He is God and man. He is everlasting Father. He's the father of life.

Father means originator. He is the originator of life, and He is the Prince of Peace. He is the one who brings peace between God and man. In Isaiah as well, He prophesizes that He will be born of a virgin. God miraculously brings about all of these prophecies that are fulfilled in the one man, Jesus Christ. He fulfilled each of the prophecies to the letter. Just amazing to see how God orchestrates history. And I love history, because it's all under God's providential control. I love studying it. I love seeing it out, but the story of redemption is at the very center, isn't it? Christ is at the very center. That is the focal point of history. I was reading another place this week, in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son.

And that means at the right time in history. When the Greek language had spread over the known world, when Roman roads connected every hamlet and village, at the right time, after these prophecies had all been given, God sent forth His Son into the world. Everything was according to this divine timetable.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

What an awesome God to know all, to possess all power, and to control all circumstances, including the precise time He sent His Son into the world as a baby who would be the Savior of the world. Just remarkable. Grant Castleberry, pastor of the King's Chapel in Raleigh, North Carolina is our guest. You can find out how to order his 25-day Christmas devotional for families with children during this break, and then more with Grant coming up. I'm David Wheaton. You are listening to the Christian Worldview Radio program.

GUEST: GRANT CASTLEBERRY:

We didn't want our kids doing all these secular games like Elf on the Shelf. We really wanted to put Christ front and center at Christmas, and they actually engineered a wooden manger that's small enough to hide. And then I wrote a family devotional with 25 devotions for every day in December leading up to Christmas, including Christmas Day, that you can do in about seven minutes. And the devotions are just loaded with the deity of Christ and the Gospel.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

That was Pastor Grant Castleberry describing *Manger in Danger*, a new daily devotional and game for families with children age four to 12. *Manger in Danger* retails for \$40 plus shipping. We are offering it for a donation of \$30 or more to the Christian Worldview. To order, go to TheChristianWorldview.org, call 888-646-2233, or write to Box 401, Excelsior, Minnesota, 55331.

The first coming of Christ is the focus of the December issue of *The Christian Worldview Journal*. Pastor Travis Allen writes about the magi who traveled a great distance to worship the Christ Child. Soeren Kern, the journal's managing editor, dismantles the false claim that Jesus was a Palestinian rather than a Jew. In my column is an end of the year letter to listeners. *The Christian Worldview Journal* is a 12-page full color print publication designed to sharpen your biblical worldview on current events and issues of the faith. It also includes a resource catalog and ministry updates.

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Thanks for joining us on The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Today's program and past programs along with transcripts and short takes are available at TheChristianWorldview.org. While there, you can also sign up for our weekly email, and *The Christian Worldview Journal* print publication, order resources, and support the ministry. Our topic today is, in a world of distraction, keep Christ at the center of Christmas. And our guest is Grant Castleberry, pastor of the King's Chapel in Raleigh, North Carolina, and the author of *Manger in Danger*.

Grant, we have been doing as a family going through *Manger in Danger*, and we're not to day 20 yet, but I'd like to ask you about that particular one, titled Growing Up. I'm just going to read the first paragraph or so here. It says, "Luke is the only book of the Bible that includes details of Jesus' childhood. Luke probably found out about these things from talking with Mary, the mother of Jesus. We learned that Jesus grew and became strong and the grace of God was upon Him, even though He is God. Jesus also grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God. All this reminds us that Jesus was and is truly a man. Like you have to grow up, Jesus also had to grow up. The Lord Jesus is both truly a man and truly God. When He was born, the eternal son of God became human in addition to already being God." Now, this is more of a theological question here, Grant, that why was it critically important that the Son of God actually become truly man in order to be our redeemer and reconcile sinners to holy God?

GUEST: GRANT CASTLEBERRY:

There's an early heresy called Docetism, and that heresy taught that Jesus just appeared to be a man. He looked like a man. He sounded like a man, but He really wasn't a man. He really didn't take on our humanity. This was deemed a heresy, because Paul talks about in Romans 5, how Jesus had to come as a second and final Adam. And what we know about Adam is that he was our first representative. He represented all of humanity in the garden. And because Adam sinned, we all sin. That's Paul's argument, Romans 5:12. And because Adam sinned, we were all plunged into death. Jesus had to come as our representative, and live a righteous life so that He could then die on our behalf. If He hasn't become man, then He can not bring us to God because He has not come all the way to us.

And that's Paul's point in Philippians 2, that He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the Father, by taking on our humanity. He came all the way down. He put on our humanity and His humiliation so that He could be one of us and therefore live for us, and die for us, as our substitute, and our representative and then be raised for us, raised for our justification. Without the humanity of Christ, then we are still in our sins, and we do not have a savior.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Very well said. Now, this is a bit of a spoiler alert. We're going to go to the last day to be read on Christmas day, day 25, celebrating Jesus' birth. And I won't read the whole thing. I won't spoil the whole thing. You can read it if you get a copy of *Manger in Danger*. You say this "On that day, December 25th, the message of Christianity and especially Christmas is a message of joy. Sometimes we forget that. In a world filled with sin, death, sickness, and suffering, it is easy to lose sight of the many blessings that God has given us. We get lost thinking about the things we don't have, or about lost friendships, or about the hurtful ways we have been treated. But, in the midst of all the sadness around us, there is a message of the most wonderful joy. There is good news for all the people. Jesus came into the world to deliver you from your sin and to give you life and hope. Luke reminds us that He is both savior and Lord."

In a recent sermon that you gave, I think it was just this last week on Luke chapter 1, it was about Zacharias, John the Baptist's Father, and he gave a message saying that the Christ who was coming, He would give us salvation from our enemies. And you pointed out that there are three greater enemies than human enemies. In other words, there are ultimate enemies of our soul is Satan who wages war against believers, and sin,

another enemy. Sin is rebellion against God. And another enemy is death, the separation of the soul and the body. So, you explain how Christ coming gives the one who repents and believes the one way to overcome these great enemies.

Just as we conclude today, Grant, could you explain how someone listening who hasn't understood or believed the Gospel of Jesus Christ that really started with His incarnation? I know it's way back in Genesis, but just for our purposes of our conversation on Christmas today, could you explain how that person can be born again and have victory over these three enemies of Satan, sin, and death?

GUEST: GRANT CASTLEBERRY:

Born again involves having a new life. And of course, this is what Christ offers you, just as Christ was sent into the world at the right time. Oftentimes we hear about the truth of Christ at the right time in our lives. Sometimes it's while we're dealing with an issue, or we've come out of a relationship, or we've hit rock bottom. But, the good news of the Gospel comes to us. And the good news is that sin, death, and the devil have already been defeated. And you do not have to be a slave to sin. You don't have to continue in your sinful patterns. The peace that you truly desire with God can be found, that you can know God, that you can have the promise of eternal life, that you will be raised from the dead, that death has been defeated, and that Satan's accusation is taken away against the believer, because that's the chief way that he holds us captive is he accuses us before God.

And all of that has been taken away by the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says in Romans 10, "All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." If you've truly believed that, if you truly trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and savior, you repent of your sins, you believe that God raised him from the dead three days later, then God promises to save you.

Now, the born again aspect is something that God does to you internally, that God does to your heart. You don't need to worry about that. You need to worry about repenting of your sins, and believing the Gospel, and God will bring about the new birth. But God promises, and God can not lie, that if you call upon His name, that if you truly believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, that you will be saved.

And I know that if you confess that in your heart, it's not just lip service, but if you truly believe that you will be changed, you will be saved, you will be transformed, and you will be born again. You will be one of God's children, because I know that because it's happened to me. I remember being an unbeliever, and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and Christ has changed my life. I've been born again.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Same here, Grant, and I'm so thankful for God convicting me of my sin, and leading me to understand and believe the Gospel. And thank you for concluding our conversation that that is the whole point of Christmas is the coming of Christ into the world to save sinners like you, and me, and everyone listening today. We appreciate your taking the time to come on The Christian Worldview Radio program today, Grant. We're

excited to hear what God is doing in your life and ministry, and we just wish all of God's best and grace to you.

GUEST: GRANT CASTLEBERRY:

David, thank you so much. So appreciate you, your ministry, your friendship over the years, and truly thank you for having me on the show. Love you brother.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Well, I hope you benefited from the conversation with Grant Castleberry. I so appreciate and respect his love for Christ and his word. Pray for him and his family that they can continue to stand firm in the faith. You can find links to Grant at TheChristianWorldview.org, and while there, you can order *Manger in Danger*. Even if you can't get through the whole devotional before Christmas, you can do some, and you'll have it for next season as well. It will be a meaningful Christmas gift for a family with children. And even if you don't order *Manger in Danger*, I would encourage you to take these days leading up to Christmas and just open your Bible by yourself, or with your family, and read the opening chapters of the Gospel of Matthew and Luke where the account of Christ's birth is found. God works supernaturally in our hearts when we read his word, and it directs our focus to where it should be on Christ.

And then, get out your hymn book and sing some Christmas Carols day by day. If you don't have a hymn book in your home, you can order the Hymns of Grace hymnal at TheChristianWorldview.org. This is a full hymn book chock-full of old and new hymns. Reading the word, singing praise to God, prayer, these are some of the ordinary means of grace that God provides for us to grow closer to Him. But, the world will distract you away from doing these things, from endless scrolling on social media, to binge-watching non-redemptive television programs, to sports games, to shopping, to get togethers, anything but the most important thing, which is a daily family devotional time with God. And finally, just a reminder that the December issue of *The Christian Worldview Journal* should be in your mailbox soon. This issue is being sent to the regular recipients, Christian Worldview Partners, and also for this issue, everyone on our mailing list.

We hope you enjoy this special year-end issue. We are out of time today, but thank you for joining us on The Christian Worldview, and for your support of this nonprofit radio ministry. If you're going to be doing some charitable giving at the end of the year, we thank you for considering The Christian Worldview as part of your giving.

Let's be reminded that, "When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that God might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Holy Spirit of his son into our hearts crying, "Abba, Father." That's from Galatians 4 Oh, what a privilege, an immeasurable blessing to be adopted into God's family, to be His child and call Him Abba Father, which captures the close loving relationship of the Father and His child.

If you haven't understood and believe the Gospel, which God offers so that we can be reconciled to Him, go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org and click on the page, "What must I do to be saved?" Keep Christ at the center of your Christmas season. Until next time, think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm.

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript, or find out what must I do to be saved, go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll-free 888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener-supported, nonprofit radio ministry furnished by The Overcomer Foundation. To make a donation, order resources, become a Christian Worldview Partner, sign up for our weekly email, or *The Christian Worldview Journal* monthly print publication, or to contact us, go to TheChristianWorldview.org, call 888-646-2233, or write to Box 401, Excelsior, Minnesota, 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview.