



"The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1)

REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

JULY 2009

What's Happening?

New RTB Resources

Hugh Ross' latest book, *More Than a Theory*, is now available. Go to the RTB webstore at <http://store.reasons.org> and click on "NEW!" Also check out the podcasts RTB has available, including multi episode companions to several of their books. Go to <http://www.reasons.org/resources/radio-broadcasts-and-podcasts>.

Help Make a Difference

The Seattle Chapter and Campus Crusade hope to do a "Skeptics Forum" at the UW next fall. To do this, we need to raise about \$5,000. If you, your church, or your group, would like to help sponsor this event, whether financially or otherwise, please contact the chapter at seattle@reasons.org.

We Do Presentations

The Seattle chapter does presentations on wide range of topics. If your church or group is looking for speakers, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. We are also happy to help you with resources to support your personal studies and/or ministry efforts.

Inside This Issue

In The News. page 2

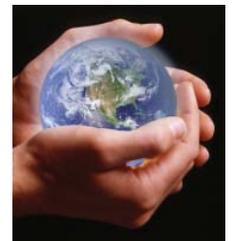
Who We Are page 7

The Redeeming Power of God's Dual Revelation

E. STAN LENNARD, M.D., Sc.D

"The man who can really, in living union of the mind and heart, converse with God through nature, finds in the material forms around him, a source of power and happiness inexhaustible, and like the life of angels. The highest life and glory of man is to be alive unto God; and when this grandeur of sensibility of Him, and this power of communion with Him is carried, as the habit of the soul, into the forms of nature, then the walls of our world are as the gates of heaven." --George B. Cheever

I share an excerpt from a book written by the Christian author, Francine Rivers, *The Last Sin Eater: A Novel*. [1] It is a description of the beauty and power of God's general revelation to bring mankind to knowledge of Him, His character, love, and grace that give us hope and prepares us for salvation in Jesus Christ. As you read it see how the light of Christ gives light to all mankind through general revelation (John 1:9), preparing them to receive the Gospel.



I lowered my head, feeling the grip of loss again and wondering about the fate of my poor Granny who'd never heard the gospel.

Miz Elda leaned over and tipped my chin. "Don't ye go worrying yourself about her, chile." She brushed my cheek tenderly and patted my hand. She leaned back again, smiling. "The last few years we was able to get together, yer granny and I talked about what might happen." . . .

"But she never heard the gospel." (Emphasis added). . .

I thought of Granny sending me off to find the wonder for myself up on the outcropping of rocks overlooking the valley, in the fields of wildflowers, down by the river where the dogwoods bloomed. All through the years she's appealed to what she called my questing spirit. And I wondered now if she hadn't been sending me out to find the miracle of God's works round about me. . . .

Now I knew why it happened that way, what Granny was trying to show me in

words she didn't have. It was no accident, no coincidence, that the seasons came round and round year after year. It was the Lord speaking to us all and showing us over and over again the birth, life, death, and resurrection of his only begotten Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord. It was like a best-loved story being told day after day with each sunrise and sunset, year after year with the seasons, down through the ages since time began.

I knew after hearing the word of the Lord, I'd never walk anywhere again without seeing Jesus as a babe in the new-green of spring. I'd never see a field in all its glory without thinking how he lived his life for us in the royal robes of every summer wildflower. I'd ever see the greatness of his love in the beautiful sacrifice in the brilliant reds, oranges, and yellows of fall, and winter white would always speak to me of his death. And then spring again, his resurrection, life eternal. . . .

"She saw, Cadi," Miz Elda said. "I'm going to believe that the Lord who can do anything he pleases opened her mind and heart and showed her the way home."

In this visually descriptive composition, the revelation of God in His creation is evident for all to see.

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." Rom 1:20

But a question has been asked by countless generations. Can the revelation of God in His creation prepare one for salvation in Jesus Christ? Is there no hope for people across the world in all of history who never heard the Gospel? After all, it was Jesus who said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) Let us examine this important question in the context of the covenant made by God with Abram and by the blessing of Abram by the Canaanite king and high priest of Salem, Melchizedek. He knew Yahweh, the God of Abram, by His general revelation. A thesis presented in the book, *Eternity in Their Hearts* [2], gives hope that general revelation prepares one to receive the Gospel through the eternal priest in the order of Melchizedek, Jesus Christ.

Abram of Ur was given a promise by Yahweh 4000 years ago if he would obey His command to leave his people and country and go to a foreign land (Gen 12:1). He would be blessed by his obedience, and all the peoples of the earth would be blessed through him since in his lineage was to be Jesus Christ the Messiah (Gen 12:3). Upon his arrival in Canaan Abram entered Salem and encountered the king who reigned over it, Melchizedek. He was the "king of righteousness," the priest of El Elyon, the "God most high." El Elyon was the Canaanite name for Yahweh. Melchizedek saw that Abram worshipped Yahweh/El Elyon and blessed him. Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything he had recovered in the rescue operation of Lot from Kedorlaomer and his allied kings (Gen 14:18-20). In this ancient culture the blessing by Melchizedek identified him as the greater of the two, and the lesser represented by Abram was obligated to give gifts to the greater. As was the custom in that time Melchizedek was also the high priest of Salem. When King David conquered Salem in later years he became its priest as was Melchizedek before him and renamed it Jerusalem. King David prophesied that the Messiah who was in the lineage of the House of David would be an eternal priest in the order of Melchizedek (Ps 110:4) "in which membership is ... not restricted to one particular lineage." [2] (Ps 110:4;

In the NEWS...

[Is Darwinism Obsolete?](#)

This *tothesource* article by Dr. Benjamin Wilker discusses how prominent astronomers, physicists and chemists are beginning to voice their disagreements with ideological Darwinism because the evidence is pointing away from it. Go to: http://www.tothesource.org/6_23_2009/6_23_2009.htm.

[Old Theories Die Hard](#)

This Discovery Institute article discusses two recent papers that raise doubts about the birds-evolved-from-dinosaurs hypothesis. One problem is birds are found earlier in the fossil record than the dinosaurs they supposedly evolved from. Go to http://www.evolutionnews.org/2009/06/old_theories_die_hard_birdsevo.html.

[Evolution - A Religious Pronouncement](#)

In this blog, Cornelius Hunter discusses what makes evolution the obvious conclusion in the minds of evolutionists is not empirical data, but rather, underlying religious conviction to evolution. Go to <http://darwins-god.blogspot.com/2009/07/sermon-by-jerry-coyne-on-biogeography.html>.

[Frailty of the Darwinian Hypothesis](#)

This two-part article on the Discovery Institute site, discusses the controversy concerning the efficacy of natural selection to drive evolution. Go to http://www.evolutionnews.org/2009/07/the_frailty_of_the_darwinian_h.html.

[The Pro-Life Conundrum](#)

This *tothesource* article by Dinesh D'Souza contends the pro-life camp must change its strategy and take into account the sexual revolution that initiated and sustains the pro-choice advocacy of abortion on demand. Go to http://www.tothesource/7_15_2009/7_15_2009.htm

Heb 7:1-22) The priestly tribe of Levi that was descended from Abram (renamed Abraham) was not to be a permanent priesthood. The prophecy by David foretold the change in the priesthood order that was to come with the New Covenant in Jesus Christ. [3]

And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared: 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.' (Heb 7:15-17) ... and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God." (Heb 7:19)

It is unknown how Melchizedek received his knowledge of Yahweh, whom he called El Elyon. [3] God has the power to reach out to people who have no access to the knowledge of Jesus Christ or of His special revelation in the Bible. (Rom 1:20) In Acts 10:34-35 Peter said, "I now realize how true it is that God . . . accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right" as led by their conscience, itself a manifestation of God's general revelation. General revelation is older and has influenced 100 percent of mankind in all of history. (Ps 19) The Belgic Confession of 1566 makes the following statement:

"We know him [God] by . . . the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, since that universe is before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God: His eternal power and His diversity, as the Apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20."

In his book, *Eternity in Their Hearts*, Don Richardson offers a thesis that identifies Melchizedek as a figurehead for God's general revelation to mankind. [2] This thesis is in contrast with his being identified with Shem, son of Noah, an angel, the Holy Spirit in human form or Jesus Christ himself. It also excludes the Mormon interpretation of the priesthood. [4] A typological interpretation that is consistent with this thesis holds that the priesthood of Melchizedek was a type of Christ's priesthood since both were priests of the God Most High, El Elyon, Yahweh. [5] Abraham represented God's covenant-based, canon-recorded special revelation to mankind. [2] Through the Abrahamic covenant the propitiation of the sins of all mankind has been accomplished by the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as expressed in special revelation. Thus all mankind has been blessed through God's blessing of Abraham. That the Messiah was prophesied to be an eternal priest in the order of Melchizedek by King David promised the replacement of the priestly Levitical order and law by the New Covenant in Jesus Christ. Abraham and Melchizedek are considered by Richardson to be "brothers in El Elyon/Yahweh and allies in His cause" to bring all people to knowledge of God and to prepare them for salvation through Jesus Christ [6] in the Great Commission.

Richardson notes that in cultures across the world unreached by the Gospel it is possible "to find God fearers living among pagan peoples."

(7) When Jesus said, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen; I must bring them also," (John 10:16) Richardson offers that He could have been referring to people brought to knowledge of the Messiah and His saving grace through the "Melchizedek Factor." [8] In his review of *Eternity in Their Hearts* David Marshall offers this explanation, "Richardson shows that God has revealed himself to 'all his children' by planting a root for the Gospel within each culture, so when people are called to Christ in mission outreach, we call them to the deepest truths within their own cultures." [9]

Marshall cites personal missionary experiences in Asia that confirm Richardson's thesis, for example how Jesus Christ "fulfills Chinese culture." [9] Early Christian missionaries to China faced the formidable task of learning their language and writing system. Two hundred fourteen radicals are combined to form up to 50,000 ideographs. Richardson describes one such ideograph for "righteous" as a well-coded message for "I under the lamb am righteous." [10] The missionaries only had to identify the "lamb" to the Chinese as Jesus Christ, the Messiah! Other spiritual messages were subsequently identified in the 4000-year-old ideographs, such as that for a boat which "embodies a vessel with eight people inside it" (Noah's ark and the foretelling of baptism and the Gospel?). The ideograph for "tree" is a cross with the symbol of "man" superimposed on it. There is no general agreement among scholars about the true meaning of these ideographs, but "the mere discussion of them may be sufficient to communicate spiritual truths of Christianity to unbelievers." According to Richardson the Chinese writing system appears to preach Christianity! [11]

The writing of the Epistle to the Hebrews emphasizes that Melchizedek's priesthood which was not based on a physical membership in the Levitical priestly lineage was "just there" and eternal.

Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the son of God, he remains a priest forever.
(Heb 7:3)

"Just-thereness" is described by Richardson as an expression of general revelation by which Melchizedek as high priest of Salem came to know Yahweh. He goes on to say that "The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews emphasizes also that the Messiah who came among men in fulfillment of every spiritual reality foreshadowed by the Levitical priestly system was also at the same time 'a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.' (Ps 110:4, Heb 5:4-10; 6:20; 7:15-22) Christ, in other words, is Lord of both general and special revelation". . . . "The true light (Jesus Christ) that gives light to every man (through general revelation) was coming into the world (to shine upon men in special revelation)" (John 1:9). [12]

Cadi's grandmother had "never heard the gospel" before her death.

When Cadi questioned her salvation in Jesus Christ the Messiah, Miz Elda was confident in the belief that the Lord “opened her mind and heart and showed her the way home.” The thesis presented by Richardson is that in truth this is possible through Jesus Christ, eternal priest in the order of Melchizedek, figurehead for God’s general revelation to mankind. [2] Special revelation has provided for the redemption of fallen mankind by the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Heb 10:10)

The redeeming grace of God has been revealed to mankind in His dual revelation, giving all people hope for salvation through Jesus Christ the Messiah, eternal priest in the order of Melchizedek.

E. Stan Lennard is a certified volunteer apologist for Reasons To Believe who lives in Snohomish and serves as an online facilitator and instructor for Reasons Institute.

REFERENCES

- (1) Francine Rivers, *The Last Sin Eater: A Novel*, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois, 1998
- (2) Don Richardson, *Eternity in Their Hearts* (1984) Regal Books, Ventura, CA, p. 30
- (3) <http://www.xenos.org/teachings/ot/genesis/gary/gen14-1.htm>.
- (4) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melchizedek_Priesthood_\(Latter_Day_Saints\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melchizedek_Priesthood_(Latter_Day_Saints))
- (5) <http://www.claudemariottini.com/blog/2007/04/jesus-high-priest-after-order-of.html>
- (6) Richardson, p. 31
- (7) Ibid, p. 107
- (8) Ibid, p. 108
- (9) http://www.amazon.com/Eternity-Their-Hearts-Startling-Throughout/dp/0830738371/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1235451410&sr=1-1
- (10) Richardson, p. 128
- (11) Ibid, p. 129
- (12) Ibid, p. 156-157

All Biblical citations are taken from the Zondervan NIV Study Bible, 1984.



Seattle Chapter Reasons To Believe

Who Are We?

The Seattle Chapter of Reasons To Believe is a local extension of the worldwide, interdenominational Reasons To Believe ministry. We exist to support our parent organization and foster local involvement in the ministry. We serve the Puget Sound area and are composed of Christians of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, what God says through His word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to Darwinism and young-Earth creationism.

What Do We Do?

Our mission is to remove the doubts of skeptics and strengthen the faith of believers. We provide scientific, historical and philosophical evidence that supports the Christian worldview and helps remove barriers to a belief in God, the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We carry out this mission by:

- Helping people access RTB and other scientifically and biblically sound resources.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Assembling a team of local apologists to address questions about science, the Bible and related topics.
- Working with teachers and homeschoolers to achieve a balanced approach to the teaching of origins.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of the RTB ministry.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, encouraging them to evaluate their worldviews.

We welcome your involvement and support. For more information, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: Seattle RTB, PO Box 99683, Seattle, WA 98139-0683.

Questions? Get Answers.

Whether you are looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God, the Bible, and science, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. You can also call the RTB hotline seven days a week, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 626-335-5282.