

Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990, USA

© ASK, February 2021 • Telephone: 503 292 4352

Webpage on the Internet: <http://www.askelm.com> • E-Mail address: [askoffice@askelm.com](mailto:askoffice@askelm.com)

Dear Associates and Friends,

February 2021

This month's article is about China. The first portion is an update of "[China in Prophecy](#)." It was first given by Dr. Ernest Martin as a lecture in 1995, transcribed and published as an article in 2009 and now expanded and updated for its present form for February 2021. This article (and the link to the audio from the *Byte Show* with GeorgeAnn Hughes) is even more relevant today than in years before.

The second portion of the article is a very brief historical review of Christianity in China to the present. The two parts give insight into what God planned for the people of China beginning in Genesis, through history to the present, to China's future as a major Gentile population group all from a single man and woman in the post-flood era.

### *The Commission of Jesus to His Eleven Disciples in Galilee*

**"And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying,**

**'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [eon, age].'"**

**• Matthew 28:18–20**

These last verses of Matthew are interesting. **What** were they to teach "**all nations**"? Certainly, they taught about Jesus being the Anointed Messiah, His death, and resurrection. If these and similar verses were given to the disciples as their commission, **why** was there a problem about baptizing Gentile peoples of the nations?

Some unknown time near when Saul became Paul (all of Acts chapter 8 to 9:31), Peter baptized Cornelius (Acts 9:32–11:18), a righteous Roman centurion. Before then, Gentile proselytes were expected to become Jews/Israelites and keep the Laws of God. If this were not so, Peter would never have had to go through the unpleasant visions that convinced him to meet the Roman in the coastal city of Caesarea. When Cornelius and his family suddenly had the evidence of the Holy Spirit upon them, Peter decided that was a final sign for them to be baptized. This shows how strong of a grip the Law had on their minds.

Every *ekklesia* of God is unique. Some are quirky (read about the *ekklesias* in Revelation chapters 2 and 3). Just as the Gospel comes through even in the worst translations, so too true Christian believers can be found in most every congregation. Those who do not "attend" are still part of the *ekklesia* of God.

After the Communists took control of China in 1949, Christians had hard choices to make: to flee, to stay and hide their faith,<sup>1</sup> to abandon their faith, and how to accept back again others who denied their faith. These difficult decisions were the same for the apostles and early believers wherever persecution of Christianity occurred throughout history. These same choices will occur to Jews when they have large-scale conversions to accept Christ as their Messiah, "**Him whom they have pierced**" (read Zechariah 12:10; John 19:34, 37; and Revelation 1:7). Many will face the antichrist's persecution.

There was a period in China called the "Cultural Revolution" (1966–1976), when places of worship were

<sup>1</sup> Hiding your faith depended on trusting non-Christian relatives, friends, and neighbors who knew the truth of their Christian beliefs. The early Communist regime demanded and enforced adherence to their new atheist state. The situation was like that encountered by Christians under the Roman Empire.

demolished, closed, or reappropriated and religious practices were banned. Christians were required to recant their beliefs or face severe punishment. Things improved somewhat better after Mao Zedong's death. Economic growth improved and social control relaxed, even for Christians. Strong growth in Christian believers in China began in the early 1980s.

When I was a graduate student and worked part-time at Fuller Seminary for 2 years, and full-time for 7 more years in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were controversies among Chinese students when the Seminary administration invited speakers from the state-approved Chinese Christian Church. The students claimed and accused the speakers of being CCP (Chinese Communist Party) members and false Christians. The reason was simple. The CCP was officially atheist since its beginning. The protests were vigorous. The Chinese students were from families that left China years and even decades before, but emotions were still raw. Similar speakers also came at later times to show a spirit of ecumenical goodwill.

At the same time, one World Missions professor told how doctrine was smuggled into China. Visitors would bring personal music cassette tapes into China. The tapes had no words accompanying the music, but those who distributed the tapes knew the words which were easily taught to audiences. The words to the hymn music taught doctrines about God, creation, salvation, Christ, and His life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and the believer's salvation — all from the Scriptures. When I heard how that was done, and the Word of God was spread, I was amazed at how simple and clever it all was. It was virtually undetectable. Since then, things changed again and now China tries to censor the Gospel from getting to their people through the internet.

### ***An Article (and Short Video) About the Star of Bethlehem***

Searching the internet a while ago, I came across a United Kingdom 2019 *Express* article with a 2000 or 2001 one-minute video clip featuring Dr. Ernest Martin speaking about the Star of Bethlehem. The article is titled "[Bible BOMB-SHELL: Expert reveals shocking 'REAL' explanation behind Star of Bethlehem.](#)" The article correctly notes that Dr. Martin was a trained meteorologist. He was then a young man with the U.S. Air Force from 1950 to 1954. He was deployed for one year to forecast the weather in Greenland, and another year at the Research and Development in High Altitude studies at Lowry Air Force Base, Denver, Colorado.

I will put a link on the "[ASK Weblinks](#)" page under the first heading "Websites Honoring Dr. Martin's Work and ASK." This article and clip are useful for ASK as a replacement for the interesting MSNBC moving graphic that displayed the planetary motion of the Star of Bethlehem in 2 BC, and how the relative retrograde and forward motions of planets were viewed over several nights. Jesus was born on September 11, 3 BC on the Day of Trumpets, a bit more than a year after the stellar display foretelling His miraculous birth.

MSNBC removed the moving graphic from their website, and it is no longer available on the internet (I looked extensively). They replaced it with an article that reviews the various theories of what the Star of Bethlehem could have been, and they do not mention Dr. Martin's work and contribution to the Star.

### ***Thank You***

We have a few readers of Chinese extraction who have communicated with ASK in the past, but there are probably more who read our website, but do not communicate with us. That is fine. Stay safe. We will try to be available when and if you can communicate with us and give us your comments on what is on the ASK website. We are grateful to God that He led you to the ASK website for whatever reason He does so. Perhaps someone might let us know if the ASK website is banned from China's internet. Some time ago, GeorgeAnn Hughes told me there was one listener of my shows from Mongolia.

The ASK website has operated since some time in 1996. Some did not like this new-fangled internet "thingy" (yes, that is a real word). But we have been posting articles and information online ever since. Thank you for making this possible in the ASK website's 25<sup>th</sup> year. It makes searching information on the ASK website easy, and I can link to other ASK documents and to other interesting material.

David W. Sielaff  
[david@askelm.com](mailto:david@askelm.com)