



# *The* Wonder Springs Chronicle

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## The Wonder Springs Chronicle

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## Mary, did you know?

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A couple of weeks ago in the post, "God if you are real?" we dealt with how God answers our doubts about His existence by bringing people and situations into our lives to answer that question. This week we will take on that testimony that is later offered by these God questioners to the people who contributed so much to establishing God's present reality. This begins, "Did you know the situation I was in?"

In that illumination, as with Genevon's return to our group Christmas party, it was a good thing that I was sitting in a big overstuffed supporting chair, because I had no idea that there was anything wrong with her, when our church group called on her that long past Monday night as she was seriously planning on taking her own life.

As we continue to understand the realness to trust God for our provisions, those life or death

situations no longer just begin, but become part of a much broader narrative in which we understand the faithfulness of God, not only as he provides for our needs, but also adds to that an abundance of blessings and gifts that mean more to us than we can at this time fully understand or articulate. Many times that blessing comes from someone we will probably never meet in this life, or if that happening does occur, one of the first questions we will ask is, "Did you know?"

We know the words to the hymn Amazing Grace. The last verse begins, "When we've been there ten thousand years," I believe that much of that time will be spent, meeting those who have blessed our lives and asking them, "Did you know?" Once they learn about our knowing, we will meet some of their "Did you know friends, and so on, and so on." Truly a gift that keeps on giving, because the wonder of the



gift of God's grace, can only be truly received if we attempt to continually give it away.

The Bible puts this in context in Ephesians 3:20,21: *Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.*

I copied this verse into the outline of this article from a daily reading email I receive from the Moravian Church in North America, for it seemed to fit well with the emphasis I thought I would like to use. I think I have met a few Moravian church members many years ago, but I ran across this devotional doing research on John Huss, and I thought I would check out their doctrine through these daily readings. I didn't know if I would use the verse, but I wanted to keep it in mind maybe, when I closed out this article. The Christmas season celebrates simply the birth of Jesus at the point in history where God entered humanity to save us from ourselves. Until I started writing, I had no idea I would lead with Ephesians 3:20,21.

Similarly, Saturday I was in Colville, to buy a couple of small items at a store where I many times just like to look at the stuff they have. After all, that is the American way, especially at this time of the year. The background Christmas music was softly playing, when I suddenly realized, can that be, yes it can. The song was, "Mary Did You Know?" being sung by Kathy Mattea. As I paused in a quiet place to listen to the rest of the song, I was wondering, "Kathy do you know how important this song is to me?"

"Mary Did You Know?" was my favorite song on my very first purchased CD ever. I played it on my Christmas present bookshelf stereo system. This was my first Christmas that I really wanted to celebrate for a very long time, because it marked what I considered a milestone on my way back to a somewhat normal life. I don't remember how I got the money for the CD and the system. At that time I think my mother normally asked me what I wanted for Christmas and just sent me the money to pretty much cover the purchase. Kathy's Christmas CD was what I bought with the money left after the player purchase and I listened to it over and over as

I still do, but now it has a reserved "Good News, Kathy" playlist on iTunes in my Christmas music folder and on my iPod.

"Good News" is definitely not a music collection about Santa Claus coming to town, so let's go to the mall and buy some stuff, so we can give things to others that they probably don't want, and if they needed it they would have purchased for themselves. Good News is a collection of stories about the Greatest Story Ever Told, set within the God given gift of music.

To fill in some of the years that had elapsed between my Good News purchase and that fateful day, when I had walked into my office, closed the door and said, "God if you are real, get me out of here?" In that decade plus, I received so many rejection letters I could not even try to continue searching for another job. I had gotten a divorce that I found absolutely devastating. I had sold the house that I had considered to be where I wanted to live the rest of my life. I had needed to liquidate all of my accrued wealth to make ends meet and to try to start a grossly under funded business.

I had lived almost a year in a motel, with a billboard sign I could see from my window, asking for help to feed and shelter the homeless. "There but by the grace of God go I," was becoming something I now understood quite well. I had lived in a house under significant remodel for about eight months, and in a house taking care of a man dying of cancer for a number of months, and I was now sort of working for my rent, by doing a little remodeling while the estate was being settled. I had never been on food stamps, and I was now beginning to make some money installing and refinishing hardwood floors, working for the only job I could get, offered to me by Gary, at the Pentecostal church I attended. This job had nothing to do of course with over twenty years of formal education and more college credits than most PhDs.

One of my goals after I got my release from corporate America was to bring some unity between my secular life, in the true dictionary definition, and my spiritual life. That Christmas I was making progress in understanding that all these losses, were in some way gains or gifts. Psalm 37:25 was beginning to make perfect sense: *I have been young, and now I am*

*old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.*

But that is not the end of the last Saturday “Mary Did You Know?” story. After I had returned to what I now call “The Hut” I was watching some of the football games. I had checked my DVR and saw that it was recording “The Glenn Beck Christmas Show.” I decided to let it finish recording before I took time to watch the show, so that I could fast forward through the commercials.

Glenn of course is a Mormon, or a member of the LDS church. Rural Eastern Washington is Mormon territory, not as strong as Utah, but in high school, we used to visit a friend to get a carload to go to the Autoview, drive in movie theater. Dave really wasn’t a church member, but his mother was definitely evangelistic. So if me, John and Roger, wanted to get six guys to go to the show we would drop in and see Dave with about an hour to spare before they began to run the cartoons at dusk. About thirty minutes after our arrival the Mormon Missionaries would show up and we had our carload. The main reason for not looking for other kids to fill up the car was most of them wanted to see if we could get some beer or something stronger to turn the night not into a double feature but an excuse to get drunk.

I also bowled with three temple Mormons when I was in the Army, our team name was the Holy Rollers, Later, as I was working entrepreneurial and small business consulting, many of my contacts and networking associates were either Mormons themselves or were in someway linked to those, who had members or LDS church resources at their disposal.

I bring this up because Christians consider Mormonism a Christian cult. But the United States is based upon freedom of religion and this country is going to need all the resources at our disposal to re whatever this nation within the miraculous freed culture that the United States Founders put in place well over two hundred years ago. Mormons are going to need the help of regular Christians, or the other way around, if this populism is going to succeed. That is a simple truth. If you have trouble with that, get over it. Become teachable to the reality that

God’s diverse ways are always totally superior to your redeemed but still sinful inherited nature.

Furthermore the religious experience emphasis and piety of Mormonism isn’t all that different than that Jesus in your heart mentality of many Christian evangelicals except that Mormons are more systematic in their discipleship and they empathize that these latter days may not offer the Rapture escape that is the major marketing tool of much of American evangelicalism. All work hard to be good Christians, and have a tough time understanding the depth and breadth of God’s justifying grace.

But back to The Glenn Beck Christmas Show. Toward the end of the program Glenn took out an old Andy Williams Christmas LP Album cover. On the show there was a video link with Andy someplace in California. Glenn was mentioning his mother had loved one song on the record called “Little Altar Boy,” and she had called Glenn her little Altar boy.

Both Andy and Glenn continued to discuss the song, while Glenn’s eyes welled up and he was having trouble keeping his emotions in check. Towards the end of the discussion, Andy was explaining that at the age of eighty two he was still doing Christmas concerts, and would continue doing so, as long as he could. Then he mentioned that the show no longer used, “Little Altar Boy, but “Mary Did You Know?”

Then I lost my cool. Special things and times I had been too busy to think about for a very long time welled up in my soul.

Mary was the prime human vessel God used to bring about the real reason you can have a Merry Christmas, when you seem to have nothing else that the world might think significant. You hear that is better to give than receive, but a gift that costs you little, can only have little value. The priceless gift of God given a Christmas is a joyful eternity, which begins here and now, nothing less.

In the same way I suppose Mary only learned after the fact, the Wonder of her blessing, even though she was told beforehand what she was going to be given. Through the Christmas miracle we all have been given that opportunity to receive a gift as humble as a baby, yet is the King of Kings. All we have to do is to believe, and yet the more we learn about that gift we begin to see that faith to believe,

is really the world's most valuable gift, not just for Christmas, but for every day of our lives.

So, you see this now has a very meaningful story line that when I started I didn't have a clue how I even wanted to put it together, before I knew that because of a, hum I guess the words of the song express it better than I ever could.

"Mary did you know?" by Kathy Mattea is available as a single on iTunes, and is totally the best .99 you will ever spend.

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
Would someday walk on water?  
Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
Would save our sons and daughters?  
Did you know that your baby boy  
Has come to make you new?  
This child that you've delivered  
Will soon deliver you.*

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
Will give sight to a blind man?  
Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
Will calm a storm with His hand?  
Did you know that your baby boy  
Has walked where angels trod?  
When you kissed your little baby  
Then you've kissed the face of God.*

*Mary Did you know??  
Mary, did you know??*

*The blind will see, the deaf will hear  
The dead will live again  
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak,  
the praises of the Lamb.*

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
Is Lord of all creation?  
Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
Will one day rule the nations?  
Did you know that your baby boy  
Was Heaven's perfect Lamb?  
This sleeping Child you're holding  
Is the great "I AM*