



## “My Hour Is Not Yet” by Dr. Jack Crabtree

*Adapted from a talk given at Reformation Fellowship, a church in Eugene, Oregon, on December 21, 2014.*

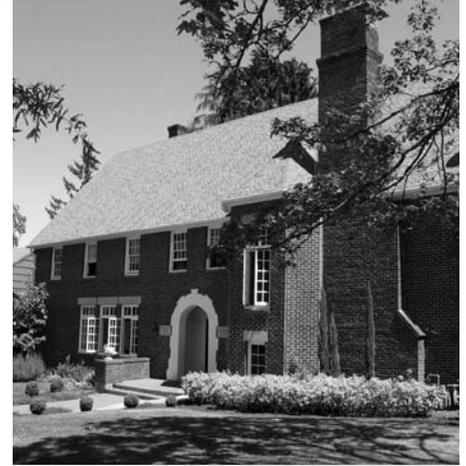
If we fail to think carefully about the gospel accounts of Jesus' birth, we easily form the impression that his birth was accompanied by many spectacular, widely observed supernatural events and that the birth of the Messiah was broadcast far and wide throughout the land at the time. But when we stop to think about it, that is not how it happened. Mary was the one and only person who knew, with certainty, that her son was born of a virgin. In all likelihood, few beyond a handful of shepherds, Mary, and Joseph were privy to the theophany and angelic hosts who announced the Messiah's birth from the skies over the pastures where the shepherds stood watch. Few beyond Herod, the chief priests and scholars of the Sanhedrin, the magi, Mary, Joseph, and a handful of neighbors knew that there had been a sign in the heavens announcing the birth of Israel's king. Only a handful of ordinary people, at most, heard the prophetic announcements of Simeon and Zacharias. All in all, Jesus made a relatively quiet entrance into this world. While it was most certainly supernatural, it was not widely known and observed.

The time when God made himself widely known to a large group of people was during the events surrounding the Exodus. God pulled out all the stops during those tumultuous events. Every single Israelite was eyewitness to God's parting the sea so that everyone of them could escape the chasing army of Pharaoh. Every individual Israelite

was fed by supernatural manna and drank miraculously provided water.

The miracles and supernatural events surrounding Jesus' birth were not on that scale. They were witnessed and known by a scant minority of Israel at best. Certainly they were not witnessed by the entire nation. Primarily, the miracles surrounding Jesus' birth seem to have been for Mary's benefit and, through her, for Jesus' benefit. God wanted Mary to know exactly who this son was so that she could impress upon him the singular destiny that lay before him. Luke (2:19) tells us, for example, that with respect to the angelic announcements reported to her by the shepherds, “Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.” In all likelihood, she kept alive the memory of anything and everything that God had revealed concerning this unusual son that had been given to her: what the angels said to the shepherds, what the stars had revealed to the magi, what the Spirit had revealed to Simeon, what the Holy Spirit had revealed through Zacharias and Elizabeth, and what the angel Gabriel had announced to Joseph as well as to herself. And, with every maternal instinct in full gear, Mary took all of this to heart and instilled in her son a knowledge of everything that she knew of what God had revealed to her concerning Jesus' identity.

We see the fruit of her maternal tutelage twelve years later. Luke (2:41-49) records that, with a knowledge that he was the promised Messiah, Jesus sat in the porches



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of the temple among scribes and teachers of Israel, pumping them with questions. Jesus wanted to have every scrap of knowledge he could glean from them concerning the coming Son of God. He wanted to know what the Scriptures taught concerning the Son, for he knew that they spoke of him and his destiny.

But a decade and a half after his session with the teachers in the temple, Jesus was still just an unknown craftsman in Nazareth. Nothing had happened to make evident to the broad public what a remarkable figure he was and what an exalted role he had. It must have been a very difficult thirty years for Mary. More than any other human being, Mary had been made privy to the divine revelation concerning her son's special status and destiny. And yet, year after year, Jesus quietly lived the life of every other Galilean. He was an obscure and humble Nazarene who showed no evidence of his exalted standing



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## “My Hour Is Not Yet” continued

in the purposes of God. And yet, Mary had pondered for decades the reality of all those things that had been revealed to her about her son Jesus. She kept the memory of those announcements alive, both to herself and, undoubtedly, to her son.

Then one day Mary and Jesus were invited to a wedding in Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-11). While Mary travelled the relatively short distance from Nazareth, Jesus travelled up from Bethany beyond the Jordan. He brought along some newly minted disciples who had become attached to him from among the disciples of John. During the wedding, the host ran out of wine.

We cannot understand the significance of this in our culture. But imagine waiting in a long line at a wedding for wedding cake or coffee or punch only to discover, when it is your turn, that nothing is left. You have been invited to a wedding reception, but you will not be served. In our culture, it is inconvenient, unfortunate, and annoying. In their culture—even if it were unintentional—it was a significant show of disrespect.

In any case, Mary erupted with emotion. She had been living for decades with the stressful disconnect between who she knew her son to be and the realities of their lives. Her son was the *Number One* human being in all of God’s universe, and they were living as uncelebrated peasants in an insignificant village in Galilee. The slight from there being no wine for them at the wedding blindsided her. “Do they know who we are? How dare they disrespect us so. My son Jesus is the King of Israel. He is the Son of David in whom God will fulfill all that He had promised His people. Every Jew in Israel will bow to him and serve him. Every king of every nation on the earth will honor him. And I am his mother! We deserve respect. We deserve honor. But all we get is this huge slap in the face. No wine indeed!”

In the midst of her anger at being disrespected, she approaches Jesus to make sure he appreciates the insult they have just been handed. “Jesus, they have no wine for us. Are you going to tolerate such an insult? You need to do something. You need to make sure they make things right for us. This is intolerable. Go and stand up for us. Go and demand

some respect. How dare they disrespect you, the Lord and Master of all.”

Jesus responds to his mother in his profoundly humble way, “Dear woman, what does the fact that they have no wine have to do with me and you? My hour has not yet come. We must be patient even longer.”

Jesus knew his destiny. The glory, honor, and respect that was due to him was still a long way off. Now was not the time when every knee would bow and every tongue would confess him as Lord, Master, and King. That day would come. But it was not now. So instead of having a hissy fit about how he had not received the respect that was his due, Jesus humbly bailed the host out of a socially difficult situation. He performed the

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first of many miraculous signs that he would perform throughout Galilee. He transformed ordinary water into exquisite wine for all the guests at the wedding.

Jesus’ words to his mother at Cana continue to ring through time: “My hour has not yet come.” Jesus’ hour had not yet come when he was insulted by his host at the wedding in Cana. His hour had not yet come when he was mocked, beaten, and crucified a few years later. His time had not yet come even when he was raised up from the dead or when he was lifted through the clouds into the heavens—for still most people did not know and acknowledge him. And, in fact, his hour has still not come today. Most of the world continues to dismiss Jesus, relegating the claims made by the angels at “Christmas” two thousand years ago to delightful legend and fantasy.

People today do not know and believe that Jesus is the promised King. Or, even if they do believe it at some level, they are indifferent to it. It is mere abstraction, not a living hope. It is something they will think about and embrace intellectually as a doctrine, but it is not something they organize their very lives around. Other more knowledgeable unbelievers even live in a certain sort of fear

of Jesus’ return as King. They aggressively deny that he is coming back soon, for they do not want to be held accountable by him. Only a small minority of mankind today lives in eager anticipation of the return of King Jesus.

But the day is coming when Jesus will be able to say, “My hour is now.” In that day, the whole world will be forced to know him, honor him, and respect him. In that day, even his enemies will bow their knee to him. In that hour, every mouth will confess that Yeshua, the baby born of Mary, is Lord and Master over all the earth. In that day, Jesus will get his due.

The Christmas story is the story of Jesus’ first coming. The Number One human being in all of created reality was brought into existence and entered the story of history during the events recounted in the Christmas story. But the story is not over. There is a second coming to anticipate. His first coming was relatively quiet and inauspicious. His second will be rather more noisy and obvious. His mission the first time was to set the stage for his people to receive mercy. His mission the second time will be to make every enemy of God subject to God’s sovereign rule—and ultimately to abolish every enemy of God for all of eternity. The first time, he rode into history on a donkey. When he returns, he will ride in on a war horse.

It is important to be ready. Jesus’ first coming came with little or no warning. It would seem that there will be greater warning the second time. But we must remain alert. We must keep watch with anticipation. If we fall asleep, he will come in judgment and sweep us away before we even know what hit us. If he came once, just as the prophets predicted, he will come again, just as he himself predicted. If we do not ready ourselves, we are fools. And there is no fool like a fool at Christmas.

May we all get ready. May we all, from the depths of our being, find true joy in Christmas and all that it portends.

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# Gutenberg Junior Tea

A fun fall event at Gutenberg College is the Junior Tea, where the members of the junior class who successfully completed all their two-year exams at the end of their sophomore year are awarded a Greek New Testament by Gutenberg Greek tutor Dick Booster.

The tradition of giving congratulatory Greek New Testaments began in 2000, when the classes of 2000 and 2003 purchased New Testaments to give to the class of 2002 at the end of their sophomore year. The faculty thought rewarding the sophomores was a great idea, and since 2001, the college has given Greek New Testaments to all the students who complete their two-year exams. In fall 2003, awarding the New Testaments was combined with a tea to honor the recipients. And as the tradition has evolved, the senior class hosts the tea for the juniors and their families, the faculty, and the other Gutenberg students. (The juniors reciprocate by hosting the Senior Baccalaureate Dinner in the spring.)

The 2015 Junior Tea honorees (below, left to right) were Ian Hughes, Paul Bishop, Meredith Wilkins, Tobias Humphrey, and Arminas Novakas.



## Please be praying...

1) This year was an excellent year for new students, and right now we have about the same number of interested prospective students for next year that we had at this time a year ago. Please prayer for even more new students next fall than we had this fall. And please pray that current and future students would have hearts that are open to the things of God.

2) On December 1st, all of our tutors accepted a 30% pay cut to help us make ends meet this year. We cannot allow that to continue indefinitely. Please pray for the

financial resources for Gutenberg to be able to restore their salaries as soon as possible, and please pray for the faculty as they attempt to make ends meet on a dramatically lower income.

3) We are considering a couple of ideas in our attempt to be of meaningful service to the Messianic community and to seek prospective students therein. Please pray for wisdom to know what are the best paths to go down in this regard.

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For more information about these prayer concerns, contact provost Peter Wierenga at [pwierenga@gutenberg.edu](mailto:pwierenga@gutenberg.edu).

## Audio Recordings

The Audio section of Gutenberg's website offers a growing number of talks given by Gutenberg tutors at various venues. More than ninety series and many individual talks are available. Subjects range from studies of books of the Bible to topics like environmental ethics, sexuality, and the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard. MP3 downloads are free.

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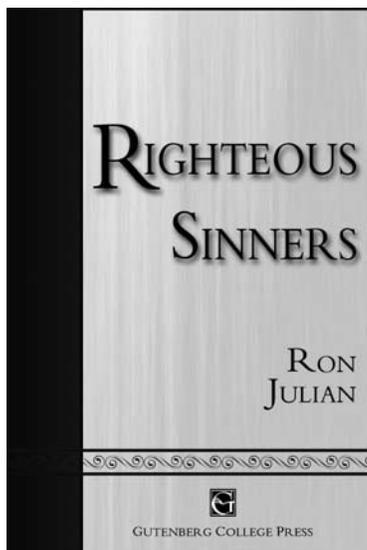
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## An E-book from Gutenberg College Press

“This book was born twenty-five years ago on a very bad night. As a young Christian (I converted at nineteen) I struggled greatly with the sin that was all too noticeable in my life. Some of my teachers at the time believed in the “victorious Christian life” theology. Victory over sin was mine, they taught, if I would just walk by the Spirit, if I would just “let go and let God.” I tried, with all the faith I could muster, to do just that. It didn’t seem to work. However I tried to “let go,” I found myself just as much a prisoner of selfishness and lust as I was before. One night—the bad night—I confessed this frankly to one of our leaders and asked for help. His answer changed my life.”

Thus begins the introduction to *Righteous Sinners* by Gutenberg tutor Ron Julian. Originally published in 1998 by NavPress, *Righteous Sinners* will be available as an e-book from Gutenberg College Press at Amazon.com in December.

J. I. Packer commends the book: “Biblically exact and pastorally profound, this book is a gem!” Paperback copies of the original book are also available from Gutenberg College.

