

**JANUARY 2023**

Mt San Jacinto

Mt. San Gorgonio



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**“This is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4).**

**DEAR FAITH FRIENDS:**

I am pleased to enclose with this letter a color catalog of 16 books and booklets I have written. Let me know which books you may not have or are interested in. I will send these to you FREE or, if desired, you may send an offering in any amount with your request. No interested person will be left out. More about this later on.....

Also enclosed is article #3 of my series **PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN**. This one takes us to Malibu, California, with its rich and famous population; a missionary trip among poor people in Mexico; a climb to the top of the dome at St. Peter’s Church in Rome; a walk along the streets of old Jerusalem; a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee—and more!

For quite a few years I have used the (above) drawing of two mountains as part of my letterhead. The mountain which rises abruptly above Palm Springs is Mount San Jacinto (elevation 10,834 feet). The other mountain, a few miles northwest of Palm Springs, is Mount San Gorgonio (elevation 11,503 feet).

I recall that Moses wrote about two mountains: Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. These were, of course, mountains in an entirely different part of the world and with a different significance (see Deut. 11:29; cf. Josh. 8:33).

It may be of some general interest to mention a couple tragedies that happened on Mount San Gorgonio:

In 1977, the 81-year-old mother of Frank Sinatra, “Dolly,” planned to fly to Las Vegas for her son’s opening night performance. Because of a delay at the cleaners for a dress she wanted to wear that night, it was dark by the time the private Learjet took off from the Palm Springs airport. Due to pilot error, minutes later, the plane crashed into the snowy mountaintop killing all on board. Had the plane been only a few feet higher, it would have cleared the mountain. Burial for Dolly Sinatra was here at the Palm Springs Memorial Park where Frank, his father, and other family members are also buried.

Ten years later Dean Paul Martin, 35-year old son of entertainer and singer Dean Martin, died in a fatal plane crash

on this same mountain during a snowstorm. Martin, an avid pilot and officer in the California National Guard, was on a routine training mission.

The other mountain in the drawing is Mount San Jacinto. The Palm Springs Aerial Tramway (opened in 1963) carries passengers to near the top of the mountain—from palms to pines—in a few minutes. Because storms usually come from the west, this mountain often holds back cold weather, making the desert almost always warmer than on the other side. In the winter it is not unusual for snow to be on the upper part of the mountain while temperatures are in the 70s on the desert floor. The Chamber of Commerce cannot brag about the extreme heat in the summer, but the good part is that the warmer climate carries over into winter with almost daily sunshine. Because of this, it is estimated that the population here **triples** this time of year (from November to April).

Palm trees—for which Palm Springs is especially known—are also pictured in the letterhead drawing. Just south of town in the Indian Canyons are 3,000 *native* palms, the California Fan Palm. More of this kind grow there, it is said, than anywhere else in the world. Other palms, planted years ago, line many of the streets. The actual number of palms here is unknown, but I have wondered if the total could reach a million.

Also pictured are *groves* of palms that produce **dates**. The Coachella Valley between Palm Springs and the Salton Sea produces more than 95 percent of the date crop for the United States. The annual County Fair is called “The Date Festival.”

The comparatively low pass between the two mountains serves as *the* route into Los Angeles and the rest of southern California. It was the route of stagecoaches in 1862. These were replaced by trains in 1876 when the railroad was built through the pass. Coming from Arizona, the original tracks were laid across what was then a huge dry lakebed. In 1905, water from the Colorado River breached an irrigation canal that was being built. For two years water flowed into the basin (over 200 feet *below* Sea Level) forming what is now the largest body of water within the state of California: The Salton Sea. The railroad tracks were relocated at that time to higher ground around the water.

As some of you know, a year ago this month, after living in the same house for **35** years, I sold and purchased another house about 8 minutes away. This makes it possible for me to still use the same post office, bank, grocery store, etc.

It was beneficial financially and in some other ways to make this move. The house I have now, while a somewhat smaller property, is much newer. The walled-in backyard has olive trees, palm trees, as well as orange, grapefruit, and lemon trees. I have a view of both mountains mentioned earlier. The house is on a very quiet street, has underground utilities, high ceilings, 8-foot doors and a three-car garage. This provides space to park my Rolls-Royce automobile (**just kidding!**—my car is a 2013 Toyota Camry; I am not a “Prosperity Preacher”!). This large garage area has room for my HO-gauge model train layout, and storage for the many boxes of books we publish.

On the subject of books, you will find enclosed a color catalog. I don’t especially like to put a **price** on books, but this is necessary so that they can be distributed through Amazon and other channels. But for you who are reading this, you can **IGNORE** the prices. Let me know which book (or books) you are interested in. Such will be sent **FREE** as a gift. I am thinking now of words from Isaiah 55:1: “You who have no money, come and buy...without money and without price.” With prices nowadays on almost everything going up and UP, I am countering this trend by putting prices **DOWN!**

Each of these books is the result of my own biblical studies over many years. In some cases, you will read things in a short time that may have taken me a long time to learn and understand. Be assured these are presented **as studies**. It would be arrogant for anyone to claim that he or she has the *final* word or *ultimate revelation!* You are free to take the meat and throw away the bones, if that be the case. We recall the noble Bereans who were commended for searching the scriptures to see if things were so (Acts 17:11).

Often there is a “story behind the story” as to *why* a book was written. Space here will allow a few examples from my experience:

Years ago, as a young preacher, I became aware (directly and indirectly) of conflicts among Christians regarding women’s adornment. Some preached that a woman must not wear jewelry, must not wear makeup, must not cut her hair, must not wear slacks. Some believed these were standards of “Holiness.” Some churches preached that a woman must not wear a ring—not even a *wedding ring!* Fortunately many of those churches today realize how fruitless some of these extreme “standards” were.

Christians would not cut off a woman’s hand, or have a son killed who was disobedient to his parents, or stone a man to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath (see Deut. 25:12; 21:18-21; Num. 15:36). Things like this, it was generally believed, were “nailed to the cross” (Col. 2:14). But, inconsistently, some built major doctrines on verses like Deuteronomy 22:5: “A woman shall not wear that which pertains to a man.” This was quoted against women wearing slacks, even though in Bible times both men and women wore robe-type garments (not

trousers and dresses). But for more about this, see my booklet **WOMEN’S ADORNMENT—WHAT DOES THE BIBLE REALLY SAY?**

Horrible teachings about divorce and remarriage have also claimed biblical support. Married couples have been told that if either had a previous marriage, except they break up and remain single, they cannot be saved. Extreme teachings like this have caused much hurt, have needlessly split churches, and even denominations. Again the question should be asked: “What does the Bible *really* say?”

**RECKLESS RUMORS, MISINFORMATION, AND DOOMSDAY DELUSIONS** was written just prior to the coming of the year 2000 when many foolish and fearful claims circulated. Now, years later, with so much on the internet (true and false), the teachings in this book remain vital as we seek to separate *fact* from *fiction*.

In my ministry, I have long recognized the wisdom of the saying: “In essentials **unity**, in non-essentials **liberty**, in all things **charity**.” While not a direct biblical quotation, it does reflect biblical principles.

Over the years I have emphasized the greatest story ever told—the story of Jesus and his love. But along with that—desiring to be a **voice**, not just an **echo**—I have often shared some of the less-known truths of the Bible.

A few months ago when I used the accompanying photo at the piano with “Buddy,” several different ones let me know they liked it. I had not planned it this way, but at the last minute he jumped up on the bench. It was like he wanted to be in the picture also!

God bless all of you with much peace and joy in serving HIM!



*Ralph*

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