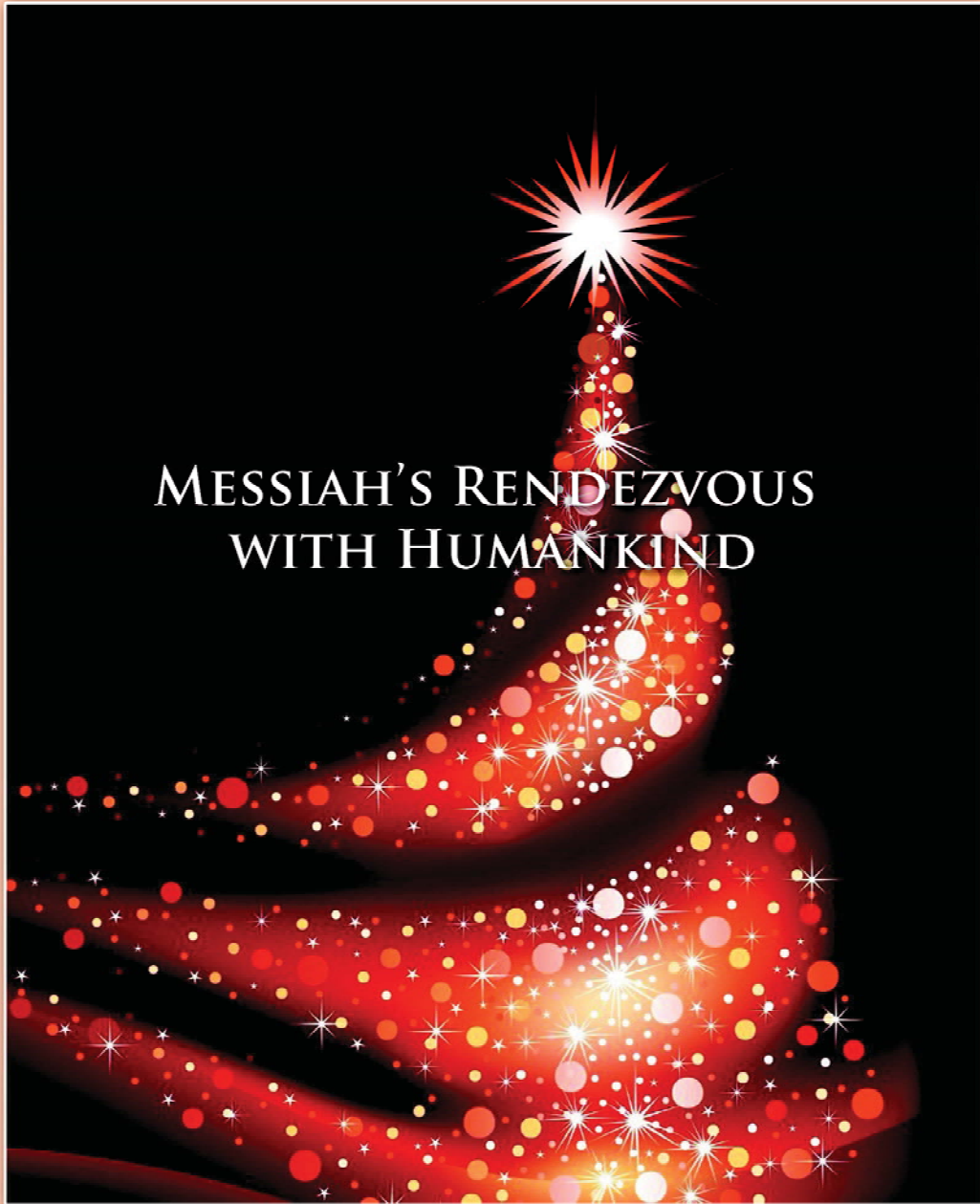


CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA - DIOCESE OF MEDAK

Church of St John the Baptist

SECUNDERABAD



The Parish Messenger

December 2018

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Editorial

“Messiah’s Rendezvous with Humankind” is very appropriate theme for this year’s Parish Messenger Magazine as we approach His birth this season yet again. Christmas, the birthday of Jesus our Lord is revered and celebrated throughout the world by believers and non-believers alike cutting across all communities of people. It is celebrated with great fervor, pomp and gaiety. The festival of Nativity is very unique and special to all of us as it engenders great happiness, togetherness etc., eventually culminating in bridging the bonds between families. It is time for indulging in fun and frolic by little trots and elders alike.

It is the season which enables us to take a pause from this hussle-bussle busy work schedule and help us to review our lives as to where we stand with our Savior, “The Messiah” who was gifted to Humankind by Jehovah, The Father.

The endeavor behind this title, “Messiah’s Rendezvous with Human Kind” is to relate to the deeper, intrinsic spiritual edification of each and every child of god. It is relevant that we invite Christ into our homes and hearts once again during this Christmas season. (Rev.3:20)

Christmas is a time to cherish receiving greeting cards, gifts, novelties and many more, and some of them very exceptionally love giving and making others happy, as this is also the season of ‘Giving’. However, we cannot reduce this very historic event to such niceties alone.

Symbolically, we visit our fellow brethren and sisters, sing carols and spread the Good News of Messiah’s birth. Yet, there are millions of people throughout the globe who are to receive this Good News of “Messiah’s coming” and we can play a pivotal role in reaching out to them through various sources and institutions who are laboring in the Lord’s vineyard.

Without flaunting, please note that this edition is very special in nature since it covers a wide range of subjects relating to Christmas and New Year besides the theme, encapsulating articles that have been presented by our members and Sunday School Children who with their innocent minds have divulged their spiritual thought process through their awesome, mind boggling art work.

It is also appropriate that we remember our loved ones who have left us to their heavenly abode during this Christmas season and express our solidarity and gratitude to each of them who have departed us during this year.

Wishing you all an enriching “Noël béni (A Blessed Christmas) & “Bonne année (Happy New Year – 2019).

Satri Chandrika Samuel

From the Presbyter's Desk



The Rev KM Charles Wesley

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, at this meaningful and most sacred time of the year, I wish to extend to you and your loved ones Christmas greetings and good wishes for the New Year.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the touchstone of our Christian faith. The Son of God did come; "the Word became flesh..." (John 1:1-14). Therefore, our Christian faith is a historic, supernatural and redemptive reality as nature. The scripture declares the fact again and again. We see the promise in the Holy Bible is itself the outcome of the incarnation. The true Christian Church in the world is witness to the fact of the saving work of Christ on earth. The power of the Gospel, the countless persons transformed by the redemption of Christ, and the assurance in Christian hearts all combine to declare that the glory of God became manifest on earth in Jesus of Nazareth.

Here we have the reason for Messiah's rendezvous with humankind or the divine intention in the incarnation. In the coming of Christ the fullness of God came down to the human level, and thus the abundant grace of God was offered to humankind. The OT law was weak and could not be the means of salvation. But grace and truth were not only revealed through Christ in the NT, they were made available to all believers through Christ. God could not be revealed adequately by the law; He could be seen in the fullness of His glory in the Son. The one who came out from

the bosom of the Father, even the Son, revealed God as living person, forgiving Father, all-sufficient Savior and everlasting Lord. Through the incarnation God revealed His saving purpose, manifested His infinite love, and mediated His abundant grace and offered life and light to humankind.

There will always be Christmas because the birth of Jesus Christ brought good tidings of great joy to all people. But how different Christmas should be from the season rated to be the peak for buying, spending and eating and drinking. Christmas is for the recognition of God's coming into the world, the praise of Christ the Son, the celebration of salvation, and the proclamation of the good news that the light of God has dawned upon those sitting in the shadow of eternal death and that the grace of God has brought the forgiveness of sins and hope of eternal life to people everywhere. Christmas should be marked by quiet periods of silent reflection about the wonders of God's revelation through the Son, by happiness of greeting and joyful celebration to share faith, hope and love in thankful praise to God in our midst and by giving gifts to share food with the hungry and healing for the sick and comfort for the brokenhearted and the knowledge of salvation for the lost. Christmas will be different if we realize that Christ Jesus has come to visit us and fill our hearts with heaven's joy and our minds with God's peace. Let us make Christmas a season of spiritual celebration to magnify God's saving love through His Son Jesus. Amen.

My Warmest thoughts and Wishes for a Merry Christmas 2018 and a Blessed New Year 2019



Messiah's Meeting with Humanity



The Rev Dr T Bhaskar

Journey through this advent season with a purposeful focus on the Christ child with the hope of meeting the Messiah encourages us to slow down and pay attention to the real meaning of Christmas. The term “Messiah” is a translation of the Hebrew word *mashiach*, a verbal noun meaning “anointed one.” The Messiah had been foretold throughout the Old Testament (OT), especially in book of Psalms and Isaiah. In the Old Testament we also hear of God’s direct intervention in the lives of people of Israel. The people waited confidently and patiently for the coming of the Messiah. But what they waited for differed significantly from person to person. Many felt the Messiah would hail from David’s line, the tribe of Judah, and be a conquering king. Some wanted a religiously oriented Messiah from the tribe of Levi. The Maccabees, heroes of the intertestamental period, with their Levitic heritage, favored a Levitical priest. First century Jews generally expected a conquering messiah. However, there were strong suggestions of priestly duties and even suffering for the messiah in the Psalms and by the prophets. Christ the Messiah and the anointed one has come as a savior to save and redeem the entire humanity from the clutches of sin irrespective of caste, creed, race, gender and color. His birth and his sacrifice on the cross of Calvary two thousand years ago had metamorphosized the entire humanity.

Reconciliation between God and Humankind

As Bible says in Romans 5:10 while we were still enemies Jesus Christ the Messiah left all his glory and power and emptied himself and has come to reconcile humankind with God the almighty. The whole purpose of incarnation of Christ was to make reconciliation between human and divine. Hence, in this special season of advent firstly, there must be reconciliation between God and humankind. This is the time where we, as individuals should leave all our worldly desires and worldly life and just like Christ, even we should empty ourselves and reconcile with Christ. The true reconciliation will happen only if our heart is pure and filled with God’s love. For this, especially in this advent season our hearts need to be metamorphosized into a manger so that Jesus Christ may take birth in our hearts. When we hear the Gospel and believe, God does several marvelous things in our lives. God “delivers us from the kingdom of darkness and leads us to the kingdom of his beloved son.” He qualifies us “to share the inheritance of the saints in light. He reconciles us “in order to present us holy and blameless in the sight of God” (Colossians 1:22). So, we go from being slaves of sin and darkness to being heirs of Christ.

Restoration of Humankind with God

From the start of the fall in the Garden of Eden, God planned a way to restore all humanity to their earlier condition of purity. Many of the Old Testament laws were transitional or situational to ease the lives

of humans in a fallen world. These laws became stepping points to restoration, but the arrival of Jesus Christ brought a stronger restoration by his birth as a Messiah to save the humanity from the bondage of sin. Jesus played a vital role as a savior in redeeming humankind and restoring the intimate relationship with God through his life, death and resurrection. Today in present context if we have gone astray from God this advent season is a fabulous opportunity for each and every one of us to prepare ourselves and to look forward to meeting the Messiah who has come down as the new Adam who can restore what the first Adam lost through sin.

Transformation of our lives

Whether we like it or not, our thoughts are shaped by the world we live in. Our cultures and communities influence the way we think. Now, that's not always a bad thing, but there is a risk of being influenced

with attitudes and societal 'norms' that have no place in a Christian's life and that is why there has to be a complete transformation in our lives. Even Bible says in Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but *be transformed by the renewing of your minds*, so that you may discern what is the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect.

This transformation happens if we let Messiah the Lord of Lords into our lives then indeed we can witness transformation. Just as Bible says in II Corinthian 5:17 if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Encountering Messiah is very important but letting Messiah into our hearts will make a great impact in our lives. His birth and having an intimate relationship with Him will transform our lives from darkness to light, imprudence to wisdom and from death to eternal life. Therefore, this advent season while we wait to meet the Messiah let us all surrender our lives to the anointed one and the true transformer.



My Rendezvous with God....

Mary Manjula Suhasini

As I sit in the small patio of our garden, watching these beautiful little buds blossom, I feel so very content, for I have created these with my own hands. Watching the seeds grow into saplings and saplings into plants. Plants flower into beautiful colours, birds nesting, chirping all the time, humming and flapping. Watching the squirrels and our dog running and chasing around, warms my heart with love and immense pleasure. I look up at the bright blue sky and thank God for showing in all this, His wonderful creation. This small habitat that I created connects me to the Lord Almighty in a special way.

But wait! Where did these crawling and irritating creepy insects come from? Eating, spoiling and killing my plants! What right do they have to destroy my creation? It's not just that! The little plant which grew into a giant tree is cutting into the wall and breaking it. I say to myself NOT FAIR!! Day in, day out I have nurtured these plants and trees in hope that one day they will make it good.

Watching the habitat that I so dearly created blemish, I can relate and feel, how much does His creation hurt the Lord God when He watches it being ruined? Does God make the difficult choices for us? Does He feel the same pain and distress when He loses one of us to the evil and temptations of the world? In that moment, so many questions and doubts in my mind are answered. With a limited capacity, I understood some of the hard choices and decisions which are made for us.

Though God is omnipresent, I find this garden, a special place to interact with Him. Our good Lord God speaks to us through His word, His spirit and His presence, even in little things, which helps us to grow in Jesus Christ. And that's how I meet up with our loving and living God.

Mrs Manjula Suhasini is a teacher and social worker. She has been member of St. John's Church from childhood. She is member of the Pastorate committee and was the women's fellowship secretary

Christmas: Hope for Humankind and Creation

Secretary's Desk



Dr M Udaia Kumar

*“O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight”*

-Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)

In the insignificant tiny town of Bethlehem something occurred that we can hardly imagine. The son of God became Man; God revealed himself to us human beings through His Son, Jesus Christ, “born of a woman, born under the law” (Galatians:4:4). The son of God did not take on the form of an angel but became true Man, so as to redeem humankind, through his sacrificial death on the cross. Humankind has continually dishonored God, ignored his commandments and persisted in “self-will”. However, God so loved us that He sent His only Son to redeem us. The angelic host declared the birth of the Son of God, in an expression of praise, bringing in the declaration of God Almighty’s “goodwill towards women and men”.

As we approach this Christmas Season, we are reminded once again that this is a season of Hope. It is a season that reminds us, that no matter where we find ourselves or what may be happening around us, God is with us. God is there to lead us and guide us through the realities of our everyday

lives. In spite of the challenges we face in this world, God is available to heal us and restore us in ways we couldn’t possibly imagine.

1. Christmas is a message of Hope that each of us is important to Christ. The first announcement of Jesus’ birth -was to some shepherds. The only invitation from God to anyone to come and visit Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus was to a group of shepherds.

God loves us and cares for us. No matter how insignificant we may think we are, God knows us, God cares for us, and we are important to Him.

Shepherds were at the opposite end of the social strata from King Herod & all the influential people of the day. They lived in the fields with their sheep. They had no power or prestige. Yet, God’s angel came to them & said, “Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour who is Christ, the Lord.”

You may be overlooked by friends, family or even society but God cares for you. All throughout scripture we see God honouring and using people and things that the world often overlooks or ignores.

1 Corinthians 1:26-28, ..26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards...27 but God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 God chose the lowly things of this world.

2. Christmas is a message of Hope for Peace on earth. Angels said to the shepherds. **Luke 2:14** “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” Humankind needed something bigger than a king. Humankind needed forgiveness of sins and therefore we needed a Saviour. The angels therefore announced that a savior was born. He is Christ, the Messiah. He is the one about whom it is prophesied so many times over in the Old Testament scriptures. Jesus is our Saviour. Jesus brings us peace with God. **Romans 5:1** We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Christmas is a message of Hope for help in our present troubled world and God’s creation. **Psalm 46:1** “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” In Jesus’ birth, the shepherds were sitting out on the hillsides, watching sheep all night long. They were poor. Life was hard & harsh for them, without much hope of it ever getting better. One glorious night, the angels appeared to them and made this wondrous announcement, “Unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.” And suddenly everything changed. God had become real to them. God had come to help them, to be their Savior, to be present in their daily lives.

4. Christmas is a message of Hope for the future and a world of sharing and caring: **Colossians 1:27** “To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope

of glory.” A meeting with Jesus changed the perspective of the shepherds. They were joyful and jubilant. In spite of their hardships, they found joy and hope. Jesus is hope for the future. **Luke 2:20** “The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.” The shepherds shared the joy of Christmas by glorifying and praising God.

As we recount this great spectacle - of Christmas, this much awaited Advent season has a lineup of celebratory events. The Church of St. John the Baptist would be blessed with insightful messages from guest speakers as well as from our resident Pastors. Events featuring the Sunday school children, Youth, Men’s & Women fellowships and the church choir would be adding to the love, and joy of the Christmas season.

I thank our Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. A C Solomon, our Presbyter in-charge Rev. T. Bhasker, and our resident Presbyter- Rev. K. M Charles Wesley for shepherding our Church and guiding us through this advent season. Thanks to the Pastorate Committee members and sectoral secretaries for all the cooperation, support and efforts.

God brought the message of hope to us through Christmas. An unimaginable event has come true- “Peace with God which gives us hope for the future.” Perhaps there is sickness, pain, failure, and struggles in this world. But Jesus brings hope and comfort. As we celebrate this amazing gift of God, I pray that you, your families and friends have a Merry Christmas and a Joyful and blessed New Year!



Messiah Meeting Humankind



The Rt Rev Dr P. Surya Prakash

As Christmas approaches, our thoughts go to the coming of the Lord, commonly known as the Advent. In this connection our parish magazine committee decided the theme, Messiah meeting Humankind, for this edition.

Messiah in Hebrew language means, God's Anointed or God's Chosen for a particular purpose. Whenever the people of Israel were in trouble, they prayed for a deliverer and God sends a messiah or deliverer to rescue them. (Read the story of Judges).

As the people of Judah were under Roman rule, they prayed and expected God to send them a messiah to liberate them. From the time of Babylonian captivity, the expectation of a messiah grew and developed during the Greek and Roman rule in Israel. (Read messianic prophecies in the Books of Isaiah and Zechariah).

In the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth, although He does not claim openly as the Messiah, people recognize and acknowledge Him as the Messiah. Evil spirits recognize him as the Anointed. (Refer Mark 5). The disciples, more so ever, Peter, having lived with him, and being his constant companion, confesses that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. (Refer Mark 8 and 9 and the parallels in Mathew and Luke).

The overwhelming witness of the New Testament, and the testimony of Peter in Acts of the Apostle, Paul in all his letters, reaffirm that Jesus of Nazareth is the God's Anointed.

This gave rise to several theological and Christological discourses as well as doctrines. The most important are, the doctrine of Incarnation, the doctrine of the Word, the doctrine of Atonement, the doctrine of Resurrection and the doctrine of Parousia (the second coming). That Jesus was the expected Messiah also gave rise to the discussion of Historical Jesus and Messianic Secret. The doctrine of person and work of Christ is very significant in NT Studies.

INCARNATION: That God becomes human. Transcendent God becomes Imminent God. Divinity meets humanity. Son of God becomes Son of Man. There are religions and faiths that speak about Incarnation. The majority religion in India, speaks about, God incarnating himself when righteousness decreases and unrighteousness increases to punish the wicked and save the righteous. God in Jesus Christ loves the world, sent him to save the world and to give life in abundance. (Refer John 3, I Timothy and John 10 again).

WORD: In the incarnation of Jesus, the eternal Word becomes flesh (human) and lives with full of grace and truth. (Refer John 1). He comes proclaiming the kingdom of God (see the Gospels) and after Resurrection, Ascension and Coming of the Holy Spirit, the Proclaimer becomes the Pro-

claimed (Refer Acts). The Word is embodied in Jesus and Jesus becomes the content of the proclamation.

ATONEMENT: There are several theories of atonement. The most important and commonly accepted are, the doctrine of Redemption, the doctrine of Justification and the doctrine of sanctification. We are redeemed by grace through faith (Refer Paul in Romans), we are justified by faith (Refer Paul in Ephesians), and we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Refer Paul in Romans and Corinthians).

The results or effects of the Messiah meeting with humanity are attested to in the Gospel narratives. No one has ever seen God but the One who sits at God's right hand only manifested him. He who has seen Jesus has seen God (Refer John I and 24). Many studies have been undertaken on the issues of Historical Jesus. Who exactly was this Jesus of Nazareth? The Gospel narratives are not historical records but faith narratives of that which have been handed down orally from generation to generation. One needs to unwrap these records to get to the question of Historical Jesus. Though not historical records, but they are accurate portrayal of the life and work of Jesus, who was born, lived and died in history. (Refer the creeds). There is also a discussion about Jesus of History and Christ of Faith. The Gospels are eye witness accounts of those who have seen, heard and lived with Jesus (Refer 1 John). The Gospel writers acknowledge that the Messiah meets with people who are in distress, the paralyzed, the lame, the deaf, the dumb, the hungry, the dead, the blind etc. He comes as a blessing and St. Peter says that Jesus goes about **DOING GOOD**. (Refer Acts 10). We sing the hymn, Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying ...

God has not forgotten the world, nor you and me. God still loves the world. He comes down to meet those in distress of all sorts. He suffers with those who suffer and gives solace.

When you read the Gospels particularly the first three, commonly called Synoptic Gospels, for they look alike in chronology, form and content, though each is also different and contain many specifics, you will notice that Jesus himself does not speak about himself as the Messiah but others as we have seen already. And every time someone recognizes Him as such, He strictly warns them not to tell anyone about it. In some cases the warning is till resurrection. This particular issue has come to be known as the Messianic Secret. That the identity of Jesus as the Messiah be withheld till his death and resurrection. This is to avoid popular belief of the Messiah waging a war to liberate. Jesus avoids as much as possible revealing himself through word and deed that He is the Messiah (see the narrative of Transfiguration and the words from the cross).

That Jesus is the Messiah is freely spoken about only after the Resurrection. It is the matter of faith. Jesus appears only to those who believe in him.

What does this all mean for us today?

1. That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (Refer Paul in 2 Corinthians 5). God came down to meet with humanity in Jesus of Nazareth.

2. By faith and experience we recognize and acknowledge the same and we are called upon to bear testimony to this fact. Communities of caste, creed, ideology and faith need reconciliation. Our country needs this now more than any time.

3. That God is not far off but among us. One day God will be with his people permanently. (Refer Revelation 21 and 22).

4. Since God is with us, we have free access to God to approach His throne of Grace (Refer Hebrews). The sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist make this real to everyone who believes.

5. Since God is with us we are not hopeless people. But we are people of hope and reconciliation. We have a mission to fulfill.

6. Above all, we are children of God and have the privilege to call him, Our Father.

7. At this time of Advent, Christmas and New Year, we once again affirm that Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth came to meet with humanity, in order that the fallen, sinful human nature will be transformed and made into a new creation, new redeemed human being to live a life of dignity, honesty, truthfulness and above all with love for God and fellow humans in God's lovely and beautiful creation.

GOD WAS IN CHRIST RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF.

MAY WE ALL HAVE A BLESSED SEASON OF ADVENT, CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR 2019.



Why Christmas Should Be So Merry

B. Sunil Kumar

“Happy Thanksgiving!” “Merry Christmas!” “Happy New Year!” As the end of the year approaches, everywhere we turn someone is telling us we should be happy.

In “O Holy Night,” we sing, “A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices.” Grieving people around you feel the weariness of life and death in this world and wonder how anyone around them can rejoice. They are in desperate need of the reality of Christ to break through their loneliness and despair. While we don’t want to preach at them, we do look for the opportunity to share with them the comfort and joy to be found in the coming of God himself in Christ to rescue us.

The life of Jesus that began in a manger will culminate in death on a wooden cross. But it will not be a senseless, meaningless death. It will be a death-conquering death, followed by new resurrection life. The writer of Hebrews explains, “The Son became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death” Hebrews 2:14. The power of death has now, to bring so much sorrow, will not be the way it is forever. What Christ set in motion when he defeated death at his first coming, will come to its full zenith when he comes again.

This is our great hope at Christmas, and the hope we have to share with those who are grieving at Christmas — that “yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.” The Christ who came as a baby and died as our substitute will one day return to consummate his kingdom. And when he does, “he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore” Revelation 21:4.

B. Sunil Kumar, MCJ (P.hD); Research Scholar; Dept. of Communication & Journalism, OU.

Messiah's Rendezvous with Humankind

"I am coming soon!" - Revelation 22



Rosalind Rao

The angel said to Apostle John (Revelation 22:6-7) "These words are trustworthy and true: 'I am coming soon!' God who tells his prophets what the future holds, has sent his angel to tell us this will happen soon. Blessed are those who believe it and all else written in the scroll".

Indeed, Jesus is coming soon!

The whole Torah spoke about the coming of the Messiah. The prophets "wondered what the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about, for he told them to write down the events, which, since then, have happened to Christ; his suffering, and his great glory afterwards. And they wondered when and to whom all this would happen." (1 Peter 1:11)

And now at last this Good News has been plainly announced to all of us. Praise the Lord and glory be to God!

Yes, "...the one who is the true light arrived to shine on everyone coming into the world. But although he made the world, the world didn't recognize him when he came. Even in his own land and among his own people, the Jews, he was not accepted. Only a few would welcome and receive him. But to all who received him, he gave the right to become children of God. All they needed was to trust him to save them". (John 1:9-12)

So we see that all who abide in Christ,

trust in him and have faith in him will truly be saved.

Hence "All those who believe this are reborn - not a physical rebirth resulting from human passion or plan - but from the will of God" (John 1:13), who sends life from heaven. (Read John chapter 3)

Let's take the story of the Samaritan woman who met Jesus at Jacob's well. She said to Jesus thinking that he was a prophet "Well, at least I know that the Messiah will come - the one they call Christ - and when he does, he will explain everything to us." (John 4:25)

The prophets of the scriptures wrote about the Messiah and the Samaritans believed and were waiting for him to come.

Jesus told her that 'he is the Messiah (John 4:26), she believed and went back to the village and told everyone about the Messiah "He told me everything I ever did!" (John 4:39)

So the people came streaming from the village to see him. Jesus explains to his disciples "Look around you! Vast fields of human souls are ripening around us and are ready now for reaping or harvest. The reapers will be paid good wages and will be gathering eternal souls into the granaries of heaven! What joys await the sower and the reaper, both together! For it is true one sows and someone else reaps". (John 4:35-37)

"Many from the Samaritan village believed he was the Messiah because they heard him themselves." (John 4:39)

"He is indeed the Savior of the world."
(John 4:42)

He promised his disciples "Remember what I told you - I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really love me, you will be very happy for me, for now I can go to the Father, who is greater than I am. I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do you will believe in me." (John 14:28-29)

"It was not long afterwards that he rose into the sky and disappeared into a cloud, leaving them staring after him. Suddenly two white robed men appeared and said "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here staring at the sky? Jesus has gone away to heaven, and some day, just as he went he will return!" (Acts 1:9-11)

Yes, Jesus is coming soon!

"Then I saw a new earth (with no oceans!) and a new sky, for the present earth and sky had disappeared. And I, John, saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. It was a glorious sight, beautiful as a bride at her wedding. I heard a loud shout from the throne saying, "Look, the home of God is now among men, and he will live with them and they will be his people; yes, God himself will be among them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. All of that has gone forever." (Revelation 21:1-4)

"And he pointed out to me a river of pure Water of Life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb,

coursing down the centre of the main street. On each side of the river grew Trees of Life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month; the leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations.

There shall be nothing in the city which is evil; for the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him.

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be written on their foreheads. And there will be no night there - no need for lamps or sun - for the Lord God will be their light; and they shall reign forever and ever." (Revelation 22:1-5)

"See, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me, to repay everyone according to the deeds he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed forever are all who are washing their robes, to have the right to enter in through the gates of the city, and to eat the fruit from the tree of life.

Outside the city are those who have strayed away from God and the sorcerers and the immoral and murderers and idolaters, and all who love to lie and do so. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to you to tell the churches all these things..." (Revelation 22:12-16)

Hence, dear friends, take heed, repent and return to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen!

Come, Lord Jesus! Praise the Lord.



Herald the Greatest Event For All Mankind

Ahoy! It is Christmas



Captain IN A J Manohar (Retd)

Christmas, signifying the birth of Jesus is celebrated the world over with much gaiety and fervor. For a world which has seen much of bloodshed with many wars across nations, Christmas is seen as a much awaited event to herald peace and joy to millions of people across the globe. Christmas is a festival to some, to others it may be a holiday and for many it is indeed vacation time. But few will recall that on Christmas Eve, during World War I, the hostilities were stopped for a day to celebrate Christmas. History reveals that the only time a brief truce was called during an ongoing war, was during Christmas Eve in the year 1914. The Germans ran across into no man's land to greet the British soldiers with shouts of 'Merry Christmas', 'Happy Christmas' and even sang Christmas carols on Christmas Eve. My dear friends, that is the power of the message of Christmas. It transcends even the barriers of warring nations and truly heralds peace and joy in a disturbed world. The question raised by many, the world over, as to what the message of Christmas truly is? It was the prophet Isaiah who made the proclamation in the year 800 BC. He said, "For unto us a child is born, for unto us a son is given. The government shall be upon His shoulder. And He shall be called wonderful, counselor, the mighty God, an everlasting father, the prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Consequentially, in Jesus, we have a solution to all the

problems that the world is facing this day. Do you need to be free from sin in your life? Do you need healing? Do you need to be free from financial problems? The only answer to you is JESUS. That is what the prophet Isaiah foretold when he prophesied the birth of Jesus. Is your life dull and lifeless? Then the answer to that problem is JESUS again. In contemporary world, the information technology seems to provide many of the solutions for the corporate industry. But our Lord Jesus has come into this world to provide solutions to the world's most complex problems. A disturbing trend in modern day living is the problem of 'boredom'. You talk to millennials, teenagers, professionals, home makers and they all say in one breath, "we are bored with life". You talk to employees and they say they are bored with routine work. Even the housewife is bored with the chores of daily routine of cooking food, keeping the house and taking care of the endless demands of bringing up children. But did we ever ponder and take the problem to our Lord Jesus Christ? I tell you this, because Jesus holds the title as 'Wonderful'. Just imagine, with such a wonderful God living in you, there cannot be a dull moment ever. Every passing moment becomes exciting, interesting, thought provoking. Christ living in you generates feelings of love, exciting moments and propels you to be proactive in every situation. The class room, work place, home and our interaction with the society will be filled with fun time, happiness and joy. I want to ask you a question at this moment; did you jump with

joy when you woke up today? I keep telling people that with Jesus in us, there is no way we can feel bored. Rather Jesus in us must make us totally and wonderfully exuberant.

If you are alive - Jump with joy. If you have woken up without pain - Jump with joy. If there is bright sunshine - Jump with joy. If there is perfect peace - Jump with joy. Go one step further, even if you are burdened with troubles, place them before the Lord and still Jump with joy. If we do this, my dear friends, our hearts will be filled with praise and adoration for our Lord Jesus. He is indeed the greatest gift to mankind whose title is 'wonderful'.

The next title that I would like to dwell is on the title of "Counselor". Every human being goes through ups and downs in their life. While we enjoy and welcome happy times like the carol services and festivities, it is difficult for many of us to cope with the trials, setbacks, defeats, illnesses, misunderstandings with our near and dear ones, failures, financial difficulties etc. Jesus Christ came into this world to solve all our problems. Even at this very moment Jesus is inviting us to seek his help for our problems. Jesus says in Mathew 11:28, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest". It was in the year 1976 while I was in the third year of engineering, I attended an evangelical union camp and my life changed totally. There in that camp, I gave my life to Jesus. Ever since, Jesus has been a constant companion to me in times of happiness, day to day activities and in times of trouble as well. As a counselor, he gave me solutions to my problems. For problems that did not have a solution, Jesus gave me the strength to manage the problem. As a counselor, he may not take away all the problems, but he will surely make the

problem lighter, only if you invite him to be your counselor.

Friends, Jesus born on Christmas day had many other titles as well. He is also a "Mighty God". He is the "Eternal Father" and the "Prince of Peace". I will dwell on these titles briefly. As a mighty God, Jesus has sovereign control over events, happenings even in our day to day life. Nothing happens without the sovereign knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. All governments, nations and the elements of nature are under His total sovereign control. The title eternal father reveals his divine nature and his dominion over time and space. His promise to you and me is the gift of eternal life which is the very character and nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. In an age of wars, conflicts, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Jesus reigns supreme in people's lives and the political affairs of each and every nation around the world. Jesus came into the world and reigns with total control as the Prince of Peace. My dear friends, truly the government is upon the shoulders of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even as doomsday prophets announce the end of the world with some going to the extent of setting a date, month and the year of the end of the world, the prince of peace 'Jesus' reigns with total control. He will reign in your life and in the political affairs till it is God's time to return. Till such time He will be the Prince of peace. My dear friends, are you looking for the Prince of peace to reign in your life? Is there something disturbing you this Christmas time? Is it a health problem? Financial problem? Sickness?

Some misunderstanding with your near and dear ones? I challenge you to cast your burden on the Lord Jesus Christ and he

will give you perfect peace in your life. "For unto us a child is born", has the message and essence of the celebration of Christmas. Indeed we are celebrating the greatest gift to mankind. But why do we need to spread the message of Christmas? Aren't the Bibles, churches and the mass media adequate to spread the message of Christmas? Why does it need human intervention to spread the message of Christmas? To illustrate this point, a story is told about a little boy who was watching the rain through the window in his room. Suddenly he saw a small sparrow which was totally wet flying in to take shelter at the window frame. The little boy was so concerned that he wanted to tell the sparrow, 'please come in'. So he went closer to the window to tell the sparrow to come right inside and not become wet due to the heavy rain. But alas the sparrow was too scared as the boy came towards it and simply flew away. Maybe, the sparrow would have listened to another sparrow but not to a little boy in this instance. This is the same principle that applies to us about our concern to the unsaved people. It is not merely the TV message or the Radio or the satellite that is going to spread the message of Christmas. Our heavenly father uses you and me to spread the message of Christmas. For the same reason God descended on earth through his son Jesus to spread the good news of salvation. I challenge you my dear friends with this very important message of Christmas. Because time is running out for many unsaved and perishing souls and we need to be on overdrive to spread the message of Christmas. The answer to the question as to 'why do we need to tell?' is also

elucidated by God himself when he sent His only son Jesus as the greatest gift to mankind. God set the perfect example by His son taking up human form, by being born as the Baby Jesus to save mankind by His death eventually. In the Old Testament the prophet Isaiah volunteered immediately when the Lord's call came. God is looking for people to take up the missionary role voluntarily like prophet Isaiah. Our participation in the greatest event, the birth of Jesus Christ, must generate new ideas and innovations this festive season so as to reach out to the unreached people. Our singing must attract people to Christ. Our festivities and celebrations with new clothes that we wear or the elaborate cakes and bakes that we make must inspire our peer group about our spiritual fervor. Our devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ this festive season must evoke and provoke those with out of Christ to be challenged to be in Christ. The perception that our culture is akin to "eat, drink and be merry" must change to a perception that whatever the parishioners at the Church of St. John the Baptist do is solely to bring Glory to God. Therefore, let us spread the message this Christmas which was foretold by prophet. May we truly celebrate the greatest event in history so that the people whom we truly serve, see us as the 'salt and light' of the world. The word of God says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they see your good works and praise our God in heaven." Showcase Jesus Christ as Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace rolled in one! I wish all you folks a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2019.



In Conversation with the Christmassy Knick-Knacks



Maneesha Esther Mohanty

Christmas is the season of love and warmth and I had been running around the entire day checking on the decorations, wrapping gifts, cooking, baking, and laying the crockery and cutleries. I was expecting guests for dinner. Phew, all was set, well ahead of their expected time and I could find some time to relax before their arrival. With a cup of hot coffee I made myself comfortable on the sofa, cuddling the cushion that looked so beautiful in the silk covers embellished with motifs of three wise men riding on the camels. I looked around my decked up home and the tiny red and green candles with shimmering golden halo atop, looked so mesmerizing. With every flicker, I could hear a soft echoing of Jesus' words, 'I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life' (John 8:12). These tiny aromatic artifacts were resonating the truth that Jesus is the real essence of Christmas. The Christmas tree was standing in a corner looking majestic and every time the blinking lights lit up they were telling me, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven (Mathew 5:16).

The gift boxes of different sizes, sitting under the Christmas tree, wrapped in glittering silver with red bows on top looked perfect. They were reminding me that 'every good and perfect gift is from above' (James 1:17) and 'each of you should use whatever gifts you have received to serve one another, as good stewards of God's grace' (1 Peter 4:10). The colorful shopping bags with chocolates and goodies for the little ones made the bottom of Christmas tree look, oh

so bright and inviting. They were calling out to me with the most important message that 'the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 6:23).

As the beauty of everything around me was engulfing my senses, I could feel fresh cold breeze gushing onto my skin and as I turned my face towards the porch, I saw the star shaking vigorously, trying to draw my attention to itself and my thoughts to the star of Bethlehem. 'The Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked where is the one who has been born King of the Jews. We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him' (Mathew 2:1-2). The shaking shiny star at the porch was pleading me to constantly focus on the star of Bethlehem which will lead me to Jesus every single day of my life. The gush of wind also filled the room with aromas from the kitchen. Were the culinary dishes resting on my kitchen platform competing with the star to grab my attention? As the aroma filled my senses, I could hear it whisper gently, 'Jesus is the bread of life, whoever comes to Him will never go hungry and whoever believes in Him will never be thirsty (John 6:35).

And then I heard ding-dong, the door bell ringing, shifting my focus to the door adorned with a wreath. 'At midnight there was a shout, Behold the bridegroom! Come out to meet him' (Mathew 25:6). The bell seem to ring a little longer in my ears reminding me to 'Come near to God and He will come near to you (James 4:8). Was everything around me trying to remind me of the divine rendezvous?

The bell rang a second time and I jumped on my feet to open the door before my dinner guests disappear. As I opened the door my home was filled with shouts of 'Merry Christmas!!'

With All Your Heart, Mind and Soul



Gabriela Keerthana Gondhi

High and low, like the tide you move,
With selfish desire, you joyfully groove;
Heart, oh my heart, where can you trace?
In Christ or world, the amazing grace?

Beguiled by worldly ways, success you chase?
With deceptive thoughts, leaving behind grace?
Why oh my mind, can't you see and comprehend
Christ is the savior, who will love and mend!

Gratified by rusting crowns, blinded by the glamour,
Bewitched by the glitz, is your rant and clamor.
Soul, oh my soul, why don't you meander to the cross?
For only there will Christ make your beauty surpass!

Riches and fame, every day you amass?
Beauty and greed, your needs so crass.
What oh what dear life, is your moral stance?
Today is your salvation day, come take the chance!
Take the Chance, Take the Chance.

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Real Christmas Celebration



IPP Prabhakar Rao

Christmas Season and the Reason for it, is given below:

This question arises often in our minds. Was it really necessary for God to become man and suffer such gruesome death for our Salvation? God could have easily done this in many other ways. We are all well aware of the Salvation story so I need not go over it once again. The first portion of the article explains also why Jesus is called the "Begotten of God"

But why such a cruel death? In the book of Leviticus we find that remission of all trespasses and sins was by offering a heifer or a bull or a lamb. These had to be ceremonially slaughtered on the Altar and their blood sprinkled on the Altar and on the people. The writer of Hebrews says, "...and almost all things are by the Law purged with blood and without shedding of blood is no remission" Hebrew 9:22; Leviticus 17:11. Since there is life in the blood, shedding of blood denotes sacrificing a life Genesis 9:4. There was again a stipulation in the Law that the animal to be sacrificed was to be without any blemish. Jesus became sin to remove our sin and became curse to remove the curse on the earth and its fullness. So Jesus had to hang on a tree because cursed is the man that hangs on a tree Deuteronomy 21:23. To shed blood Jesus had to become a man and a man without any blemish. Jesus as the second person of the Trinity is also spirit and spirit has no flesh and bones and

no death Luke 24:39. Hence if Jesus were to save us from our sins, He had to become a man with flesh and blood and without blemish and duly enabled to die. In Hebrew 10:5-7, we read that God prepared a body, (a body that will bleed and die) to be a worthy sacrifice. To be sinless he had to be God and to shed blood he had to be Man. In addition to be cursed He had to hang on a tree.

On Jesus being blameless, we have to dig into science. Jesus was both free from sin by word, deed and thought and also by nature. Unlike human beings who inherited Adam's sin, Jesus did not. He was absolutely pure and worthy to be acceptable as a sacrifice sufficient for all humankind, past, present and future. Virgin birth should be interpreted in this sense. Mary though a virgin did not contribute anything for Jesus' absolute pure blood. Hence Jesus is called 'The begotten of God' and not of anyone else. When placed in her womb by the Holy Spirit, Jesus as zygote (pre foetal form) did not draw any blood from Mary's system. Modern studies tell us that foetus does generate its own blood and does not draw it from its mother. (This explains why a person does not necessarily have the same type of blood either of the father or the mother). Mother then sustains the growth of the foetus with her own food intake. Thus the blood of Jesus is absolutely pure and free from any inherited sin, being begotten by only the Holy Spirit and none else. Mary could be called the surrogate mother in this case. This is the reason why in the book of Hebrews, Jesus is compared to Melchizedek, the High Priest of the Most High God who had no father or mother or without a beginning or an end of his days and who received title

from Abraham the ancestor of Levi. Melchizedek thus can be stated to be the Archetype of Jesus Christ.

In Leviticus 25:25, we read a commandment given by God to the nascent Israeli nation. If a brother becomes poor and sells any part of his inheritance, his brother can redeem it. Similarly if a brother becomes very poor and sells himself to a stranger he can be redeemed by his brother or nigh of kin. This was the legal position. When Adam sinned he lost the authority which God gave him over His creation Genesis 1:28. Not only Adam lost his authority, but he had sold himself to sin and became its slave. So Adam's next of kin only can redeem his inheritance and for Adam who is this next of kin? This one should be a free man to redeem Adam. A slave cannot redeem a slave. After Adam's sin every human being inherited the sinful nature and became a slave to sin. Romans 3:23. So there was none to redeem Adam or his inheritance. Seeing this irredeemable situation, God Himself came as a man to be the next of kin to Adam eligible to redeem His enslaved brother.

Nobody should have any doubts of Jesus being God Isaiah 9:6. Luke 3:38 says Adam was the son of God. And in Luke 1:35 Angel Gabriel tells Mary that the One who was going to be born of her would be called the Son of God. Thus Christ as a man, in reality becomes the brother of Adam and hence a true next of kin eligible to redeem Adam and his inheritance. Hence after Jesus' sacrifice at the Cross everybody who claims His salvation based on this sacrifice becomes a brother to Jesus and is redeemed. If one does not claim this, he is not a brother and this redemption will not be applicable to such. Dear Reader, are you willing to say yes to Jesus?

Jesus not only provided unblemished

blood as a sacrifice sufficient for the sin of the whole world but we also see another necessity for the unblemished blood. In Exodus 24:1-8, we read that Moses sprinkled blood of the slaughtered animals upon the Altar raised by him and upon the people when he read the Law and people agreed to obey the Law. He thus confirmed the First Testament as binding on the people and God as well. Now the time for the New Testament has come which was prophesied and promised six centuries ago in Jeremiah 31:31-34 to be written not on stone tablets as before but on human hearts who say yes to Jesus. This New Testament instituted at the Last Supper by Jesus had also to be confirmed with blood but not of animals but of the pure blood of Jesus himself which was done on the Cross. This New Testament is thus binding on all the believers and honored by Christ himself.

But this is only half the story why Jesus became Man. The doctrinal root for the other reason is even earlier than the sin of Adam and is even more astounding. Please read Genesis 1:26-28. God made man and entrusted him with the authority to subdue the earth and to rule over all the living species, the beasts, the birds, the cattle, the sea creatures etc and all the resources of the earth. (Man is not covered in this authority because mankind is God's deputy. Man cannot rule over another man. God would rule man). God willingly gave this authority to man because man was His handwork. Please also refer to the Psalm 8. Looks as if, God sat back and let man rule the earth, and not He. We can see this clearly because in the next chapter in Genesis we read in v19 God wanted to see what names Adam would give to each of the species and it is said that what Adam called that was its name. God did not modify nor cancel nor suggest any alternate names, as Adam was engaged in this task.

Obviously Adam did that on his own probably, by what he saw or heard or felt or smelt of these beings. I believe God must have been watching and smiling approvingly of the names. Name-giver is greater than the name-receiver; So Adam ruled the earth under the authority given by God uninterrupted and without interference. After all God was in day to day dialogue with Adam. Can we imagine that kind of world? So now this relationship needed to be continued.

Enter Satan into this pristine world. Adam sinned and fell, his relationship with God broke down, and Satan usurped this authority. (We also lost the extraordinary privilege of dialoguing with God on daily basis and hence today the necessity for prayer. Genesis 4:26 we now make our humble petitions to God through Jesus). Since the fall, Satan has been the ruler of this world and Adam was helpless. God still owns the earth and the fullness thereof but Satan usurped and rules it. That is the reason why Jesus calls Satan the ruler of this world. John 12:31. Satan also very arrogantly offered to hand over the stolen

kingdoms and nations to Jesus on the

Mount of Temptations if only Jesus bowed down to him. God allowed this for a time and in fullness of time He sent His Son as the Second Adam. The second reason is now clear- To defeat Satan and wrest power from him. God could have defeated Satan any time and on any terms, but to be fair, God wanted Man to defeat Satan on Satan's terms and get back man's authority. Jesus before His ascension told His disciples "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth" Mathew 28:18. Now we know, Jesus is the Second Adam and Satan considered Him to be his enemy and to fight Him by fair and foul means to defeat the Second Adam.

Christmas is, celebrating Jesus coming down as man to be able to shed blood as a redeemer and to wrest power from Satan in a fair duel fulfilling every title of the Law Luke 24:44. It is difficult to separate Christmas from Easter. Christmas without the bloody battle is not Christmas and Easter without the pure unblemished birth of the Lamb is not Easter. All glory to the birth of the Paschal Lamb.

How can I improve myself within a month? Few ideas -:

1. Read Psalms 51 daily to detoxify your speech. Reduce the use of negative words. Be polite.
2. Read and meditate on the word of GOD every day.
3. As disciples of Jesus, practice OBEDIENCE
4. As Jesus did, feed the hungry – feel good factor
5. Imbibe the virtues of being calm and let the day take its freshness and awe
6. Keep distance from people who give you negative vibes about the word of god, but never hold grudges and try to teach him GOOD virtues.
7. “I cried as I had no shoes until I saw a man who had no feet”. Never complain the LORD will provide us.
8. In a healthy body resides a healthy mind filled with eternal grace. Do not litter it with junk.
9. Keep your body hydrated at all times, practice praising his name all the time
10. Our lord never spoke rudely, promise yourself that you too will never talk rudely to elders/parents
11. Taste his love it's found in abundance and with grace
12. Do not be afraid – God will command his angels to protect you wherever you
13. Let prayer become your habit, never give up, no matter what comes your way
14. Converse daily with God through prayer, ask him for his favor
15. Have patience, everything happens according to its clock

God's Rendezvous with Humankind



Jason Wilson

"Praise to the thought that dreamed us"

God created the earth in order to provide a place where His purpose and goals for humankind might be fulfilled. God designed human being as a triune being (body, soul and spirit) possessing mind, emotion and with which they can respond to Him freely with worship. God had so desired this intimate relationship with human race.

God the Father created Adam and met him often and spoke to him in the Garden of Eden. After the fall, God promised to send the Savior to redeem humankind. (Genesis - 3:15).

God had spoken to Noah, Abraham, Moses and other prophets sometimes through angels. These prophets had been sent to bring the drifting humanity closer to the Almighty. God revealed himself in the form of the burning bush to Moses on Mount Sinai where the Ten Commandments were handed over. In fact, God was with the Israelites throughout the 40-year journey in the wilderness. When He parted the Red Sea, He was with them; when the multitudes were hungry. God sent Manna from heaven and during the Passover too.

The Messianic Prophecies, prophesied by Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah, Habakkuk, Zachariah, Malachi are being fulfilled as recorded in the New Testament.

Prophet Isaiah 9:6 The birth of Messianic King Wonderful Counselor

God sent His only Son for the salvation of humankind. His love for us was so much, that he sacrificed His own son. Gospel according to St John 3:16 - God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to redeem us.

Jesus himself spoke often to God the Father. When he multiplied the five loaves and two fishes to feed 5000 people, Jesus spoke to God; When he brought out Lazarus from the grave Jesus spoke to God; at the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to God and finally on the cross Jesus spoke to God to let the cup pass.

The Gospels and Epistles record Messiah's interaction with various cross section of people, fishermen, demon possessed, rich, poor, male, female, sick, tax collectors, people in authority, etc. After the resurrection and till today Jesus appearing to both Believers and also to persecutors is well known.

By His direct interaction and appearances, God has transformed Nations, Groups, Churches, Assemblies, bringing mankind to enjoy his fellowship. Ex. Jacob, Paul, Billy Graham, Mother Theresa and so on.

In our day to day life too we encounter our Messiah. When we feed the hungry or clothe the naked, show concern for the widows and orphans, visit the prisoners and counsel them and spare time for the lonely and broken hearted, we are in an encounter with God. "Whatever you do to the least of my brethren that you do unto me." This is like meeting Jesus everyday of our lives. These are all one-on-one meetings. Blessed are they who have not seen but yet believed.

This world is going back to the days of Sodom and Gomorrah and Biblical revelations are coming to pass. In this time of religious, political and environmental turmoil, the Messiah's Rendezvous with humankind is the only way for purposeful and peaceful existence. As promised in the Bible, Jesus our Messiah will come for that ultimate rendezvous and pick up the righteous souls to be with Him in heaven.

As we come to the end of 2018, entering the Advent season moving on to 2019 having the light within us continually assures us a safe destination.

New Kingdom Promise: Isaiah 65:24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Messiah's Rendezvous with Humankind; Christmas and New Year



Andra Esther Shalini

The messiah-

The gospel of Luke in 2:11 (NIV) we see the wonderful declaration by the angel of god - "today in the town of David a savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the lord". This instance where the shepherds in that part of country who were spending the night in the field, taking care of their flocks were terribly afraid as the angel appeared before them to deliver the good news of the birth of Jesus Christ shows us that Jesus is the messiah.

This reminds me of yet another declaration in the new testament by Peter, which is beautifully recorded by Matthew in 16:13-16 (NIV) "When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, Who do people say the Son of Man is? They replied, some say John the Baptist others say Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. But what about you? He asked. Who do you say I am? Simon Peter answered, " You are the Messiah, the Son of the living god."

What a great revelation Peter received. Yet it wasn't by his flesh but by our father in heaven. Matthew 16: 17). Peter was a human being as well. Then why do many of us yet being Christians struggle to have that sort of revelation in our hearts? It's because of our evil nature, faithlessness, prayerlessness and unbelief. We get a chance here to repent of our shortcomings

before Christ. Let's not miss the chance but grab it.

The rendezvous -

John 1:1 (NIV) says "in the beginning was the word, and the word was with god, and the word was god." We all have our bibles with us which contains the word of god, which enables us humans to meet god any moment of the day. What a great privilege! Are we willing to meet him? How much of our time are we spending with god? John 1:14 (NIV) says "the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." Our Heavenly Father chose the human form to meet us so that he could be close to us and spend time with us, know us and our problems. What a great God we have who is so thoughtful about us.

I want to share the lyrics of a song which goes like this,

"My bible, my bible and I

What a wonderful treasure god gave without measure

We are travelling together, my bible and I

My Jesus, my Jesus and I

What a wonderful Savior God gave without measure

We are travelling together, my Jesus and I

His spirit, his spirit and I

What a wonderful comfort god without measure

We are travelling together, his spirit and I."

With the world around us boasting about materialistic riches which last for a short time, our Heavenly Father provides us with riches which are forever with us. This song reminds me how God has graciously met the humankind.

Christmas -

Once I read an article in the newspaper, a Christian woman was asked to speak a few words about Christmas. I read the whole article but couldn't find Jesus Christ's name in it anywhere. She mentioned about family, sweets and decoration but essence of Jesus Christ was missing. Which isn't right?

We all are delighted since Christmas about to arrive. But what are we delighting in? Is it the family gatherings and feasts, decorations, vacation, new outfits or gifts plenty other things as well which are sadly not Christ centered. Psalm 1:1,2 (NIV) says "Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers but whose delight is in the law of the lord, and who meditates on his law day and night". What you delight in is what will direct your life, so be careful as to what to delight in.

What are we delighting in this Christmas? Let's have a quick spiritual check up and ask god to correct us and focus on celebrating a Christ centered Christmas this year.

New year- Time is flying.

People nowadays more often than not use this phrase "Time is Flying". I too have the same experience. What I learnt this year is that time will fly but how are we

using it makes the difference to us as well as god. Ephesians 5:15-17(NIV) "Be very careful then how you live not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the lord's will is."

What about the salvation of us and our family and friends? Are we praying for them with a burden in our hearts? Apostle Paul is a greatest example we have. Romans 10:1 (NIV) "Brothers and Sisters my heart's desire and prayed to god for the Israelites is that they may be saved"

What is our heart's desire and prayer?

Some questions haunt us and discourage us but through all this misery and shortcomings, Christ is our everlasting hope and help. We can only look to him alone.

I WISH ALL MY DEAR CHURCH MEMBERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR 2019.

Tid Bits

- Count your blessings, not your problems
- Don't just wear the cross – bear the cross
- Put your creed in your deed
- All Christians have the same boss
- Blessed are those who can laugh for themselves, for they will never cease to be amused
- If the devil is knocking to your front door, let Jesus answer it
- Orange you glad; you're the apple of God's eye?

The Cradle That Rocked The World



Yashodhra Desappa

It is Christmas once again, a time to celebrate the Birthday of birthdays. Christmas is the time, where the veil is drawn back and the Invisible God becomes a visible God to us. With all the hype of Christmas, we forget the real meaning of Christmas.

The angel told Mary, you shall call his name JESUS, which means that HE will save us from our sins.

WHO IS JESUS? He said “I am the Bread of life” **John 6-35** and was born in the House of Bread - Bethlehem. He can satisfy the deepest hunger in our hearts. The **Prophets** foretold this, 100’s of years ago.

WHY DID HE COME?

(a) HE came to give HIS life as a ransom for many. **Mark 10-45** and as **John 3-5** says that “He was manifested to **take away our sins**”. **John 8-36** says, “If the Son sets you free you will be free indeed”.

(b) HE came to destroy the works of the devil. **John 3-8** says “The Son of God was manifested that HE might **destroy the works of the devil**”.

(c) HE came as **John 10-10** says, “we might have an **abundant life**”.

(d) HE came to prepare us, for His **Second Coming**. **Hebrews 9-28** says, “To them that look for Christ, shall HE appear the second

Time, without sin unto Salvation”. When HE came the first Time, there was no room in the inn. **John 1-11** says, “His own received Him not”, how tragic. When HE comes the second Time **Philippians 2-10** says “Every **knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Lord**”.

WHY SHOULD HE DIE?

(a) **Hebrews 9-22** says, “**Without shedding of BLOOD, there is no remission for sin**”. This means that by HIS death, HE removes the guilt and punishment of sins, by paying the price. HE did it because HE loved us and **died instead of us**. Paul says in **Galatians 2-20** “The Son of God **LOVED ME** and gave his life for me”. **John 1-7** says “the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sins”.

(b) The wages of sin is death and on the cross, HE took our penalty.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO? The greatest thing we can do this Christmas is to accept God’s unspeakable **GIFT—Jesus into our life**.

RENDEZVOUS - Christianity is about relationship and not rules. Jesus said “Love God first and love your neighbor as yourself”. The **Christmas Connection** is **discovering a relationship with God**. A **Rendezvous** is a meeting at a particular time and place. **Galatians 4-4** says, “When the fullness of time was come, **God sent forth HIS Son, made of a woman—to redeem us that we might receive the adoption of sons**”. What a privilege to be sons and daughters of the king.

HE stands at every heart's door and knocks. HE will not barge in. We have to open the door of our hearts, if we want to have a relationship with HIM. It is not enough that HE was born in Bethlehem. HE has to be born in our hearts today. That is Christmas. This Christmas let our lost Connection with God and others be RESTORED through JESUS.

HOW CAN HE BE BORN IN OUR HEARTS? By saying this simple prayer "Jesus of Nazareth, who died for my sins and rose again, I thank you for forgiving me and accepting me as your child. Come into my heart and be my Lord."

When we say this prayer and believe, then this Christmas will be really MEANINGFUL as we think of Jesus, not merely as an infant but as Immanuel-the risen, presently living, soon coming, King

of Kings, ever living in our hearts. Our relationship with Jesus starts NOW and continues through ETERNITY.

WRONG WAY – a driver had taken a wrong turning at a traffic junction without noticing it. So he continued in the wrong way unconcerned. He was a careful, correct driver, following all directions, EXCEPT he was going the wrong way. It can be like that in our lives also. We can keep all the rules, but **the only right way to heaven, is God's way through Calvary**. This season we can say, "I know JESUS", but what matters is, does Jesus know you?

May the Blessings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, cause us to really experience the Joy of Christmas and the Supernatural SHALOM, of SAR SHALOM, the Prince of Peace Isaiah 9-6.



Epiphany

Epiphany has its origin in the Greek word *epiphaneia* meaning to 'show forth'.

Epiphany is one of the oldest Christian Feasts. It refers to a realization that Christ is the Son of God.

Western churches generally celebrate the [Feast of the Epiphany](#) on January 6th to commemorate the visit of the Magi who came to see Jesus Christ soon after he was born.

Traditionally, Eastern churches, following the Julian rather than the Gregorian calendar, have celebrated Epiphany in conjunction with Christ's baptism by [John the Baptist](#) and celebrated it on January 19th.

Some Protestant churches celebrate Epiphany as a season, extending from the last day of Christmas until [Ash Wednesday](#)

Rendezvous of JESUS



Sis. Priscilla Dhyram

Jesus was born into a world that had changed drastically from the time His people, the people of Israel, had returned from exile some 500 year earlier. Politics, Culture, Language and religious practices in Israel had all undergone great shifts. The time was right for God to send his son into the world to be the Messiah, Savior and the King. But He wouldn't have come in a way that everyone expected.

Israel had been waiting for their Messiah and there were many expectations about what He would do for them and how it would look. He was supposed to be a mighty leader who would re-establish Israel's hold on the land God had given to their ancestors Abraham, expelling the Romans and recalling the Glory of the age of David and Solomon. The Messiah was expected to be the climax of Israel's story, the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises to His people. Nobody expected the Messiah to come as a baby of a humble girl from a small un-important town in Galilee. Nobody expected Him to gather a small group of disciples and walk around the country, telling their stories and challenging the religious authorities.

But Jesus is the climax of God's story. He is the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises to all God's people. The four Gospels tell the story of how this man from the margin of Israel society displayed God's power through mighty miracles and

through teaching with authority. They tell the story of how this unlikely Messiah gave the world far more than any military or political leaders could ever have. They tell the story of God with us, the eternal Son of God made flesh to live among his people and offer them Salvation and Eternal Life - far more than the earthly kingdom they were hoping for.

In order to understand the story of Jesus, the Messiah, we need to get the lay of the land - who were the key people and social structures at that time? Where and with whom Jesus spent His time? Who were the people that flocked to see Him? Who were the ones threatened by His popularity?

People and Culture

Greek influence: A few centuries earlier, the Greek Empire had conquered most of the known world and along with the rule they brought the culture and language to the Jewish people. Jesus was born into a world that was still heavily influenced by Greek thought and virtually everyone would have known the Greek language in addition to their local language.

Roman Rule: Roman Empire was in control of the entire world of Gospels and had been for nearly a century. There were several level of Roman Government as can be seen in the Herod family, Pontius Pilate, the Roman Soldiers and who made appearance throughout the Gospel. Rome collected taxes, enforced peace sometimes with brutal violence and allowed many religious freedoms that were not always permitted under the Greek rule.

Jewish People: There were several Jewish groups during the period in history. The Pharisees and the Sadducees bridged the political and religious leadership; the teachers of the religious and the priest were primarily responsible for the religious life of the people. The group such as the Zealots and Essenes were radicals. The Zealots wanted to take political power by force, while Essenes separated themselves from the world in an effort to live in purity marked by ritual holiness. Ordinary Jewish people were able to worship regularly in local synagogues, led by the main stream religious leaders in the community. They would journey to Jerusalem only to worship in the temple for special life events and religious festivals.

John the Baptist: John did not really fit into any of the major Jewish group of his

day. He was a Harold of the coming kingdom of God, calling everyone to repentance and preparing the way for Jesus and his ministry. Many people traveled into the wilderness to hear his message and be baptized, including a number of people who would eventually follow Jesus.

Jesus and the Disciples: Jesus was born into an ordinary family and grew up in an ordinary town, but his life He chose a very diverse group of disciples, some followers of John the Baptist, at least one Zealot, a man who collects taxes for Rome and the collection of uneducated fisherman. Jesus taught these disciples what it meant to follow him and prepared them to be his ambassadors on earth after his resurrection and ascension.



Christmas Riddles

(answers are printed in reverse order)

Divij Samuel

1. The snowman went to see the dermatologist because his head was itchy and dry. What does the snowman get when he itches his dandruff?
kselafonsw
2. What is parents favorite Christmas Carol?
tthslghniei
3. If a lion had a Christmas music album, what would it be called?
ebgslsluelnj
4. I come with many colors, so beautiful and bright, I turn so many houses into a beautiful sight. What am I?
htsamtshgilsirc
5. I get chopped, decorated and on one end you'll see Star on top. What am I?
htsameetrrisc
6. What would an apple and a Christmas tree get if they had a baby?
eleappeni
7. Why did the little drummer boy allow the chicken to join him in his band?
daheshkcitsmurdseuasbe

(Source Getriddles.com)

Messiah's Rendezvous With Humankind



Rev. John Ranganath

The Bible foretold that the Messiah would come into the world and deliver people from sickness, suffering and death, is Jesus Christ that one?

How would people recognize the Messiah?

According to Bible Prophecy, the Messiah or Christ, would come in two different roles separated by a long period of time. In his first role he would be a human so that he could be clearly recognized. Bible writers foretold many aspects of his life and ministry. In fact, the writer concerning Jesus is a primary objective of Bible prophecy:

"Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, you must not do that I am fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy". (Revelation 19:10)

As a human, Jesus did on a small scale what he will do on a Global scale as a mighty spirit. What Bible says, the Messiah would be:

"A descendent of King David - Isaiah 9:7; Luke 3:23 - 31.

"Born in town of Bethlehem - Micah 5:2; Luke 2:4 - 7

"A humble proclaimer of Good news - Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:43

"Despised and held of no account -

Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 26:67, 68

"A sacrificial Lamb who would annul sin and enable humans to have a clean standing before God - Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29, 34, 36.

"Buried with rich - Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27: 57 - 60

"Resurrected on the third day - Matthew 16:21; 28:5-7

Jesus fulfilled all those prophecies and many more. He also healed the sick and raised the dead. He thus not only provided us with further proof that he was the Messiah but also gave us a solid basis for faith in the Bible's promises that he will do those things on a global scale in the future (Luke 7:21-23, Revelation 21:3, 4). After his Resurrection Jesus sat at God's right hand awaiting the time for him to finish his Messianic work- Psalm 110:1-6

How will the Messiah complete his work?

The Jews of Jesus day expected the Messiah to liberate them from Roman Rule and to reign over a restored Kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6)

Only later did that Jewish followers understood that he would complete his role from heaven as a mighty spirit vested with vast authority - Matthew 28:18

What the Bible says:

"In his second role: The Messiah would rule as king of Gods kingdom, a world government - Daniel 7:13, 14; Revelation 11:15

"Be a blessing to all humans who exercise faith in him - Genesis 22: 17, 18; Psalm 72:7, 8

"Startle many nations and their rulers when

he crushes them for opposing him - Isaiah 52:15; Revelation 19:19, 20.

"Preserve an international great crowd of righteous humans into a peaceful new world - Revelation 7:9, 10; 13 - 17.

"Teach his subjects the ways of true peace - Isaiah 11:1, 2, 9, 10.

"Eradicate sin, the underlying cause of sickness and death- John 1:29 ; Romans 5:12

"Ultimately break-up all of Satan's works and unite the human family under

Jehovah's Gods rule - 1Cor 15: 25 - 28; 1 John 3:8.

Jesus fulfilled his first role as Messiah. He will also complete his second. The wise therefore study him closely for Jesus said I am the way the truth and life - John 14:6

In his days the righteous will flourish and peace will abound until the moon is no more. He will have subjects to the ends of the Earth. Psalm 72: 7, 8.



Legends about Christmas

Bessie John

Carols

Initially created in the form of a song about the Nativity. This tradition disappeared for some time and re-appeared in 1822 when carol singing became popular.

Christmas tree

As cities began to grow, the original YULELOG was replaced by the Christmas tree. Usually a Fir or Spruce tree would be decorated. This tree represented Christ bringing new life to Earth, after a long, cold winter. It was in 1604 that the first tree appeared in Strasbourg.

Christmas tree lights

An old manuscript in the Sicilian Monastery tells the following story about the tree lights. When Jesus was born, all creatures on Earth, including the trees, went to Bethlehem to give Him the gifts. The fruit-bearing trees had much to give and they pushed Fir trees (which had only Evergreen leaves), to the back. An angel felt sorry for the Fir trees and asked the stars to come down and rest on the boughs of the Firs. When Jesus saw this He blessed the Fir trees. Thus was born the custom of Christmas tree lights.

Tinsel

Another legend tells us why we use Tinsel on our Christmas trees. Many years ago a lady put up her Christmas tree and during the night spiders crawled over the branches and left their webs behind. Jesus wanted to reward the Lady for all her good deeds, so He blessed the tree, and all the webs became sparkling silver threads.

Poinsettia

Mexican legend tells us that the Poinsettia originated as a miracle. A poor boy with nothing to offer Jesus at Church fell on his knees and told God how much he loved to give Him money. As the boy stood up, there grew the first flower of the Holy night. He plucked the flawing red flowers of poinsettia and laid his gift on the altar.

Christmas cards

The first formal Christmas card was designed in 1843. It was lithographed on stiff, dark cardboard, which depicted people with glasses of wine, raising a toast and saying, "Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year". Today over 1 billion cards are sold in U.S.A. and U.K. alone.

Meeting with Jesus: A life-changing Experience



Mary Sujatha

The word "Messiah" always reminds me that Jesus is coming soon. The word makes me alert and be ready to go along with Jesus. He came to this earth as a human being and lived like an ordinary man. Jesus, being born in a simple carpenter's family, must have observed and experienced the problems in a family. That's why he was very passionate towards the humankind.

Jesus meeting with the disciples:

When Jesus started his ministry, He was considerate towards the illiterate fisher men - Simon and his brother Andrew. He loved them and asked them to follow him and made them as fishers of men. Both the brothers loved and trusted Jesus and followed him. Simon, called as Peter, had become a great evangelist and was likened to a rock on which Christ built his temple. Do you want to become like Peter -- a rock on which churches are built?

Jesus meeting with the Samaritan Woman:

Jesus met the Samaritan woman, knew very well that she was living in sin. He interacted with her not minding any customs. Jesus had concern for her so he gave her living water. The woman had a great opportunity to meet the Messiah. She realized to whom she was talking and left her water jar and went back to the town and told the people to come and see Christ. She became an evangelist. What a wonderful thing. People when they interact with Jesus they will leave their sinful life and will be ready to proclaim Him as Christ. Do you want to become like the Samaritan woman -- an evangelist?

Jesus meeting with the Bethany family:

Jesus loved a small family at Bethany. Mary, Martha and Lazarus loved Jesus very much and

He was one among them. When they lost their brother, Martha blamed Jesus for not being there with them. Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies and who ever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11 : 25). Here we can see how much Jesus loved Lazarus. Martha acknowledges that Jesus is the Messiah. Are you acknowledging Jesus in your life?

Jesus meeting with Zacchaeus:

Jesus had an association not only with simple and common people but also with people like tax collectors. Jesus called Zacchaeus by name and told him, "I must stay at your house today" (Luke 19:5). What a surprise for Zacchaeus! He just wanted to see who Messiah was, but the Lord called him by name and salvation has come to his house that very day. There was a tremendous transformation in Zacchaeus: the lover of money gave half of his possession to the poor and paid back four times the amount to the poor whom he cheated. Jesus meeting with people brings change in their attitude. Do you want to become like the tax collector Zacchaeus -- a cheerful giver?

Jesus meeting with Pilate:

Jesus met Pilate in the court. As Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. But Herod was greatly pleased because for a long time he had wanted to see who Jesus was. Herod ridiculed him and sent him back to Pilate. It indeed was a surprise! Until then Pilate and Herod were enemies, but the moment they met Jesus both became friends. Meeting with Jesus, makes enemies to become friends. Do you want to meet Jesus and become His friend?

In the above context, we have seen that people after meeting with Jesus, their lives were changed and became witnesses for the Lord. Don't you want to meet Jesus and be a living witness?



The Lord your God in your midst

Sunitha David

The Lord your God in your midst,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet you with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing."
Zephaniah 3:17 NKJV ??

Christmas is synonymous with Celebration. Families, churches and hearts open to hope and joy. Cashing in on the buoyant spirit is the world of commerce. They steal our hearts with enchanting displays that set cash registers ringing. Alexander Pope, an 18th century poet's comment on women, "They shift the moving toy shop of their heart" has become universal, cutting across time and gender barriers. Affection can always be shifting without the "Love, Joy, Peace" to anchor ourselves in that which the season rings in.

Guess what? Heaven still celebrates birthdays and Zephaniah shows the way in chapter 3:v17. The New King James Version says He will quiet you with His love. 'To rejoice' 'to quiet' and 'to sing' are words associated with watching over a child. And, God the Father does this for His children! We have seen mothers doing it, with their nurturing nature but here God is doing it. He is the creator God. He made families, their bonds and ties.

In the nativity story, we celebrate Mary's obedience to God. In the 'Magnificat' Hymn, we hear Mary's song of prophecy set to music. Mark Lowry's

'Mary did you know' is a song tugging at the heartstrings. It sings about the mother experiencing joy at the baby's birth yet knowing there is a much greater plan of God to save Man at work in her little baby. Michelangelo's famed 'Pieta' celebrates motherhood in marble. Makes us wonder, can stone convey so much of human emotion. Mary and the baby Jesus are central to the nativity. The shepherds, the wise men and the angels complete the beautiful picture.

Can we see the father in the Christmas story? Not Father Christmas with his jolly laugh and an overflowing bag of presents. But do we see the pain and embarrassment of Joseph as he quietly decides to put aside Mary? He does not want to subject her to pain and shame, till God intervenes and an angel of the Lord instructs him to take Mary to be his wife. The child to be born is begotten of God. There are two difficult journeys to be undertaken by the newly-weds. One to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus and the other to Egypt away from jealous Herod. Life has not gone according to plan for them. By opening their hearts and home to the savior, they together obey the will of God for their lives. Joseph is the quiet, strong, God-fearing and compassionate man working the will of God in their home. In every home and every heart Christmas holds the promise of love, joy and peace when Christ comes in. Surely Mary and Joseph's home experienced it first-hand!

For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;

And the government will be upon His shoulder.

And His name will be called

Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. -- Isaiah 9:6

The Mighty one will save, says Zephaniah the prophet. He will not just save but nurture those He saves as a mother nurtures her child. "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you." Isaiah 49:15. God celebrates the birth of His children, every one of His children are precious in His sight. God became man. The gift is given. It is given to us. So, the

word says "Unto us a child is born, to us a son is given". It is a gift to all mankind yet so personal. It is only when we accept it; we unfold the gift of salvation. It's a gift that never gets old. It's a blood covenant, forging a relationship with our father, God. We can rest in His love. The moving toy shop of our hearts can find rest. He quiets us with His love.

His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches over me. The calm assurance of being loved is ours as He watches over us. The song writer could not have penned it better when he said... "how quietly the precious gift is given" also "the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight" (O little town of Bethlehem).



Cryptic Description of Common Carols/Christmas Songs

Example: Approach everyone who is steadfast

Answer: O come, all ye faithful

1. Ecstasy toward the Orb
2. Hush the foretelling spirits harmonize
3. Still nocturnal period
4. The primary carol
5. Embellish the corridors
6. I'm fantasizing about a blanched yuletide
7. The good, old days, of long ago
8. Hard fruit made edible by combustion
9. Hey miniscule area south west of Jerusalem
10. Proceed and narrate gossip from a high location

Answers: (printed reverse)

10. O' Tell it on the Mountains
9. O Little Town of Bethlehem
8. Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire
7. The Good Old Days of Long Ago
6. I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas
5. Deck the Halls
4. The First Noel
3. Silent Night
2. Hark the Herald Angels Sing
1. Joy to the World

Messiah's Rendezvous with Humankind



P Samuel Albert

It's Christmas Polka Season and rightly it's the time to eulogize the great rendezvous of Messiah with humankind. Yes, indeed this overwhelming rendezvous took place at a time when the human race was facing a huge crisis, the economies of the world were in tatters and there was widespread unrest, upheaval and social injustice and discontent among communities across the world. Humankind was at its lowest ebb and was longing for a Savior, a Messiah to save it from extinction. Ironically, this rendezvous of Messiah with Humankind was prophesized two thousand years ago and the human race had totally gone into oblivion by forgetting this very promise by God the Jehovah.

The humankind was in such an awkward situation that it could not even recognize the coming of Messiah until the Angels broke the news to the Shepherds in the fields. There were ample signs through which this mega event was foretold by number of prophets many many years ago. Nevertheless, this rendezvous is what has saved the world of today from its extinction.

Ironically, Jesus Christ's birth in the form of a human being into this sinful world was agog to witness this unimaginable, unforeseen intrusion by the meta-physical world, the heavenly world of Jehovah the Almighty to keep His promise to mankind by sending His only begotten son Jesus Christ to save mankind/humankind from the excruciating clutches of bondage to sin.

Until the coming of Messiah, humankind never knew or experienced the "Realm of Spiritual Life". I would go one step ahead and categorically assert that there was no intrinsic value for human beings in this secular world. Human beings lived a meaningless life serving their selfish goals and wants. Hedonism was at its peak wherein all that people knew was "Eat, Drink & make Merry". To say it differently, "Enjoy your life till the hilt" a well known slogan predominantly doing the rounds even these days among the young folk. Astonishingly, it is the same case with many of the regular church going youngsters and adults. Many live in superficial world not knowing the real meaning of Messiah's mission.

The dawn of social media era, has significantly contributed to this hedonistic following as many lives seem to be in great disarray as they are unable to understand or realize their potential of physical and spiritual lives. Today, people are getting exasperated because they are not in a position to achieve either of it, i.e., materialistic life and Spiritual life. They are struggling to achieve both the spheres with their own strength which is not happening.

This is the consequence of the failing social fabric because of the emergence of dominance of the satanic forces across the world. The evil one is ensuring that the present generation is far away from the spiritual world, far away from the Lord and His Kingdom. Though the nuclear Christian families still continue to hold onto the tenants of Christianity, the present generation is very easily lured to the freebies

the satanic world offers on a continuous and unrelenting, unabated manner.

In this context, it is overwhelmingly important to remind these young minds of the glorious rendezvous of our Lord Jesus Christ with Humankind several decades ago and who continues to touch the lives of millions of people across the world. The Holy Spirit, the spirit of God, which was promised by our Lord Jesus Christ during His ascension to Heaven, powers on in full throttle doing the mighty work of counseling, comforting and revealing the will of God in our lives from time to time. It is the Holy Spirit which convicts us on a regular basis of the sins committed by us and enables us to make up with our Lord Jesus Christ in spite of our failures, breaking of our covenants, promises, etc.,

We as human beings are at a prolonged war with the physical and spiritual realms and often tend to get messed up in our understanding of the real purpose of our Messiah, which is a natural process. Karl Marx, philosopher Descartes and many great philosophers attribute this tendency by human beings to the instability of our feeble minds as spiritual realm is metaphysical.

The Bible, the law book of spiritual realm of Christians is the only way for us to understand the will of God and the purpose of Messiah's Rendezvous with us (humankind) and we should continue to cherish and flaunt our revered position of being called the Children of God by keeping our bodies and souls infallible.

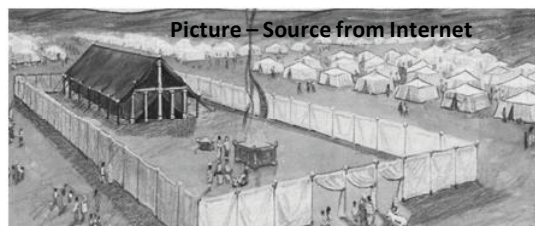
For me, the rendezvous of Messiah happened at the age of 14 when I attended a Youth Camp conducted for Sunday School Children at Nellore. Many youngsters flocked this venue and the preacher aggressively preached the purpose of our Messiah and what it means to be a

Born-again-Christian. I would term this experience the real rendezvous of Messiah with myself. Ever since that experience, it has been a great war within myself with both the worlds (physical and spiritual) and I can, without an iota of doubt, testify that the rendezvous of Messiah in my life has transformed me as a better human being, a person who is in a position to understand the purpose and will of God in spite of my innumerable iniquities which I unknowingly and unintentionally commit throughout the day or days of my life.

This recognition of the purpose of Messiah in our lives is pivotal to our prolonged hope of meeting our Lord Jesus Christ in His Kingdom and living everlasting to everlasting praising Him and honoring Him.

Jesus, our Lord has assured us a place in His Kingdom (John 14) and it is my and all other Christians endeavor to attain this purpose which is carried out by the Holy Spirit.

To illustrate the rendezvous of people of Israel with Lord the Jehovah, I have sourced the following picture of the Temple built by Moses from the internet. However the rendezvous of Messiah with Humankind has transformed our bodies as the temple of God as rightly written by St.Paul (1Cor:3:16).



Truly, Messiah's rendezvous with Humankind has transformed the very purpose of this sinful and physical world. God Bless.



Flawless God into the Flawed world



Shebha Wesley

In the movie Home Alone, Kevin wakes up to find that his entire family has gone on their Christmas Vacation and have left him behind. In all the chaos and confusion of trying to get their large family out of the house, no one notices that Kevin is not with them, so he wakes up in the morning and realizes he is in home alone. If you have seen the movie, you know that Kevin experiences some of the joy a 10 year old boy faces when he is left home by himself, but the movie also shows some of the sadness and fears he faces as he encounters dangerous and uncertain situations.

While for many the Christmas season is filled with love and laughter, for others it is a dark and depressing time. Christmas is a time where we invest so much effort, time and hope into creating special Christmas moments, but then hopes collide with reality. May be an unresolved stress led to yet another fight with your spouse, and tension is still on, May be your dear children (whom you have lived your life for, done all hard work and made many sacrifices for) have become overwhelmed by their me, my family and my world attitude. May be your vision of gathering the whole extended family together has imploded. And you have reached your limit

on your time with parents, in-laws, or siblings and now trying to just survive with hurt piling up all around, may be its something more serious. May be, while everyone else seems warm with delight and joy, you are feeling cold and lonely. Behind your beautiful smile, there is an unspoken sore, a hollow ache, that feeling of loneliness in a crowd, or may be this season of business and stress has taken a heavy toll not just on your body but also on your soul. Your physical and emotional fatigue are only compounding your feelings of disconnection with God, and you seem to be swallowing secret tears. Or maybe, this season you are marked by grief. You have lost a loved one or are carrying a heavy sorrow and Christmas triggers feelings of mourning rather than joy. Whatever it may be! We might be struggling this season going through any of the above and are experiencing and examining the reality of loneliness... Christ's incarnation bestows a unique hope in such times of grief and sorrow!

Luke 2:8-14. The fact that God sent Angels to make the announcement to shepherds about the birth of Jesus, helps us to understand the real meaning of Christmas. The Shepherds were insignificant people who were encircled with fear yet through the Angelic announcement of the Good News, Christ transformed their lives. The reason God

sent Jesus into this world is because He loves us and He wants us to know that and He wants us to love Him in return. John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." God loved us so much that he came here in the person of Jesus, to forgive us and to save us so that we can have the opportunity to live with God and love him forever. **"No matter how insignificant you may think you are, whatever we may be going through, God knows, and you & I are important to Him."**

There are many hearts that are broken and struggling to celebrate the gift of life and love in the midst of tragedy, violence and death - but Christmas reminds us that God has not forgotten us and neither has given up on us. In fact, **we ought to celebrate Emmanuel - God with us ... right in the midst of our situations!** God is with us in this mess and we need to be there for those that are hurting. Elizabeth was willing to be a support and mentor to Mary. Are we willing to support and mentor those around us who need someone of faith in their lives? Are we willing to reach out in love to those that are hurting today?

Christmas reminds us the most marvelous message of the Messiah's meekness to meet humankind. He entered miraculously into our messy world, into our frustrated situations, into our dysfunctional families, promising us hope of restoration, healing & good tidings!

Advent season reflects on the perfect & the impartial God, entering into our imperfect and problems filled humanity. Son of God arrived as a Savior making Supreme sacrifices: being born in a manger, humbled himself as a slave and was willing to be that slaughtered lamb for our sins. Christ's rendezvous was to redeem us from the bondage of sin, to reconcile us with the father, to restore the relationships, rebuild the broken walls and heal the hurts. Christ is very much present in our flaws and failures, frustrations and fatigue!

The wonderful mystery of the incarnation isn't set apart only for reflection but calls to remember his "Parousia"(Second Coming), to celebrate the Good news, to reconciliation with the redeemer and receive Christ into our hearts and homes. No matter where life takes us. Christ loves us; He is always with us, by our side, as Shepherd to lead us, and a Savior to save us.

Christ the Messiah of rendezvous with Humankind... Right where we are at!

6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6



Messiah's Rendezvous with Humankind



James Samuel

Pondering about "Messiah's Rendezvous with Humankind" fills me with anticipation, wonder, fear, awe, amazement, excitement and a great amount of speculation as to how this encounter would be?

Assuming that He met each one of us in person, how would the scenario be?? Would our Messiah hug us, embrace us and envelope us in His loving arms? Would He be 'Happy' or 'Sad' about us? Would He wipe away all our tears? Would He think we have been obedient to His calling? Would He see if we have done enough justice to His Image (for He so lovingly created us in His own image - Genesis 1:26)

This list can go on.....

But, conversely we do not have to make such assumptions because we can probably see the 'Messiah meeting Man' in so many forms as God as He keeps revealing Himself to us in the least expected way on a daily basis. The onus then is on us to be alert, active and always on the watch for we don't know when or how He may come (Matthew 24:44).

So as the loving Messiah keeps revealing Himself to us - The Church (The Body of Christ), needs to keep vigil at all times and exude Christ-Like demeanor to 'ALL' alike.

This Christmas, let us be reminded of the 'Blessed Babe' who came in a humble

form and lived for us here on earth as our Savior, Guide, Friend, Companion, Confidant, Provider, Father, Brother etc fully human, yet fully divine.

He knows how it is to be human and how vulnerable we all have been to the shortcomings of the flesh, yet his divine power far exceeds human attributes and 'WE' in 'HIM' can be more than conquerors through His love (Romans 8:37) and nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:39).

Therefore, we ought not to shy away from displaying our Godly nature, for He lives in us (2 Corinthians 13:5) and we Love just as He Loved us (1 John 4:10) and God sending His Son as the Blessed Messiah to mankind as a human being gives us a great hope to live as He expects us to live.

As we gear up to celebrate His birth soon, let us prepare our hearts to receive Him with thanksgiving and gratitude and share the same love we received from God to everyone around us irrespective of caste, creed, religion and race.



Christmas Humor

What would have happened if three wise women would have visited the Manger, instead of the three wise men?

The first Lady would have brought a home-cooked meal for the Holy family.

The second Lady would have brought a layette of clothes for the Infant.

The third Lady would have picked up a broom and cleaned the stable thoroughly.

The Joy of Sharing



Girija Augustine

As the advent approaches, my imagination goes down the memory lane of the factual history described in our Holy Bible. I hear the deadly cries of the babies, below two years of age, some 2018 years ago, along with the terrible lamentations of the Jewish mothers. These boys were robbed off their laps while they were happily playing or drinking milk from their mothers' breasts. This was an order from the King Herod when he was informed of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ as the King of Kings, by the travelling Wise Men. It is a moment to remember the sacrifice of these voiceless, innocent children. We don't see the mothers' grumbling nor their disunity even in their darkest moments of history. This was the conviction and hope they had in

the Messiah. Many a time this aspect of HOPE, LOVE and PEACE go unnoticed. It is the hope that the MESSIAH who is born amongst them is going to bring PEACE and JUSTICE to their nation which was curdling up in horrendous slavery and oppression.

Often times, words seem easier than actions. The path of our Lord is a path of suffering and sacrifice. Yet, he says "My Grace is sufficient for thee." We are His blessed children.

As we are preparing to celebrate the birth of our Lord, let us question ourselves, amidst the laughter and joy of Christmas, how much of our love are we sharing with others in despair and in need.

Let us all take our Loving Lord who never condemned anyone, beyond the structural places of worship and share the joy of Christmas in UNITY, PEACE and LOVE.



"Angelic Voices" during Sunday School Christmas Pageant

Find the bible references related to 'Salvation'.

Chandrika Samuel

As we celebrate the birth of Christ who came to this world to save sinners, let us rejoice in his gladness. Find answers from New Testament

1. And hath raised up an horn of **salvation** for us in the house of his servant David
2. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to **salvation** not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.
3. And cried with a loud voice, saying, **Salvation** to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.
4. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for **salvation** unto the ends of the earth.
5. And take the helmet of **salvation**, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:
6. For I know that this shall turn to my **salvation** through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
7. For the grace of God that bringeth **salvation** hath appeared to all men.
8. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto **salvation**.
9. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the **salvation** which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.
10. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto **salvation** to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

(answers in reverse)

2 Timothy 2:10 - Romans 1:16
- Ephesians 2:8 - Philippians 1:11 - Titus 2:11 - Hebrews 9:28 -
1 - Luke 1:28 - 2 Corinthians 2:10 - Revelation 2:10 - Acts 13:47 - 2

Answers: printed upside down

Christmas Games 2018

Joyce Thompson

Guess the Carol.....

1. Lord...earth....heart...nature
2. Faithful...joyful...king....adore
3. Little...sleep...stars...light
4. night...calm...bright...child...tender...sleep....peace
5. glory....nations.....Bethlehem...king
6. glory...earth...creation...messiah
7. city...shed...baby...bed....mild...child
8. Emmanuel....rejoice....Israel
9. Night...stars...shining...savior....holy....divine...
10. first...angels....shepherds....fields...cold.....born....Israel
11. kings...gifts...mountain....star...bright...guide...light
12. watched...flocks....ground....glory

Quiz:

1. What guided the three wise men to the infant Jesus?
2. Where did the three wise men see the celestial body?
3. Who did the three wise men say they were looking for?
4. What country was Herod the king of?
5. Where did Herod send the three wise men?
6. Why did Herod want to know when Jesus was found?
7. What reason did Herod give to the Three Wise Men to explain why he wanted to know about the birth?
8. What was the name of the Roman Emperor who sent out a decree that the entire world should be taxed?
9. What was the name of Joseph's city?
10. What is the other name for the city of David?
11. Why was Jesus laid in a manger?
12. What did Mary wrap the baby Jesus in?
13. What were the shepherds doing in the fields?
14. Who gave the shepherds good tidings of great joy?
15. Who did the angel refer to when he spoke to shepherds - (Clue: For unto you is born this day...)
16. Who else appeared with the angel?
17. Where did the angels go?
18. What gifts were given to Jesus by the Three Wise Men?
19. Where did Joseph and Mary go to flee from Herod?
20. How old were the infants that were slain under the orders of Herod?

Word Search:(Find all the 15 words which are related to Christmas)

C A N O I T A V L A S D N S H S
Q S H E P H E R D S R F A L L U
R A T S A M T S I R H C T E J S
N E M E S I W S H E E P I G O E
J G N I K M A R Y G I U V N S J
M O S Y I H X Q U R Q W I A E T
D O N K E Y R E G N A M T D P M
Z I L I N N K E E P E R Y O H F

(Sourced from the Internet)

Scrambled Words:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. NNI _____ | 8. RTAS _____ |
| 2. ESEHHDPSR _____ | 9. NYOKDE _____ |
| 3. HWORISP _____ | 10. YABB _____ |
| 4. JHOPSE _____ | 11. RMGENA _____ |
| 5. TEHMHELBE _____ | 12. SSJEU _____ |
| 6. YMRA _____ | 13. IGFST _____ |
| 7. LATESB _____ | 14. AGLSEN _____ |

(Sourced from
the Internet)

NOTE: Please send in your entries to joycethompson09@gmail.com at the earliest. The first 10 entries who get all the games answers right will be given prizes by me. So hurry up with your entries. Please note ONLY ONE ENTRY per individual per family. Families from the editorial team are not eligible to participate. :)

The answers will be sent across to your email ids on request only after the 7th of Jan 2019.

My wonderful residence: this Christmas winter

Keerthana Lydia



On a cold winter night,
Babies clinging so tight,
Stars shining so bright.
Frost crystals with all its charm,
Snowy pines into their calm,
Blooming cherries in the farm.
Glimmering icy lakes everywhere,
Skaters slithering here and there,
Smell of joy in the air.
Snowcapped mountains,
Flowery fountains,
Colorful curtains.
Oh, what great bliss does the winter dance bring,
With the glorious ring,
And lovers' Kissing.
A king is born to save me and you,
Innocent and true.
In a manger full of hay,
He will take us with the horses' neigh.

Psalms 46:8 “Come and see what the Lord has done. See what amazing things he has done on Earth.”

Christ has come as a “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”

Ms. Keerthana Lydia is an avid reader and achieves contentment in all that she writes. She believes that some words are just not enough words and can pull a reader into her world on utter imagination.

Cross Word

Divij Samuel

1. To escape from which king did Joseph take Mary and Baby Jesus to Egypt
2. Where did Jesus grow up after returning from Egypt?
3. In which city was Jesus Born
4. In the Gospel of Mark, how does the Virgin Mary learn of her pregnancy?
5. According to the Gospel of Matthew, how many wise men visit Jesus at his birth?
6. After leaving Bethlehem, to which country did Joseph, Mary, and Jesus travel?
7. Which country does St. Nicholas originally belong to?
8. Which is the most popular ornament used to place at the top of the Christmas tree?
9. Every elf has this ornament on the tip of their shoes. Which ornament are we talking about?
10. Everyone is familiar with the mistletoe tradition. What is the color of berries of the plant?
11. How many points does a snowflake traditionally have?
12. Which country was the first to use the tradition of Christmas trees?
13. According to the Holy Bible, Jesus Christ was born in a _____ day
14. December 26th, the day after Christmas is celebrated as _____ day
15. How many days do we have between Christmas and the Epiphany?
16. Which of these was not a gift given by the 'Wise Men' to Baby Jesus – gold, silver, myrrh, or frankincense?
17. James _____ was the first person to wear a tailored Santa costume and walk around the store, distributing gifts?
18. How many reindeer drive Santa Claus' sleigh (counting Rudolph)?

Answers

1. King: Herod; 2. Egypt; 3. Nazareth; 4. Angel; 5. Three; 6. Syria; 7. Germany; 8. Star; 9. Elf; 10. Red; 11. Six; 12. Sweden; 13. Winter; 14. St. Stephen's Day; 15. 40; 16. Myrrh; 17. A. M. S. Claus; 18. 8

R	E	V	L	I	S	Y	M	Y
B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M
O	G	Y	E	K	T	G	H	A
X	Y	S	R	E	II	D	N	N
I	P	U	O	F	R	G	A	G
N	T	X	D	A	E	Z	Z	E
G	S	S	L	L	E	B	A	R
F	N	I	E	D	G	A	R	M
I	I	X	W	II	I	T	E	A
L	N	E	V	L	E	W	T	N
L	E	I	R	B	A	G	H	Y

Out of a Manger Came Our Savior

Much has been said of the Savior lying in a manger for a bed.

And yet I still write to remind myself the purpose of that starry night
when God stepped down to bring us new life.



Ms. Beulah Supriya

Peace on earth we sing as the baby was born to be king.

A baby our Savior? God in a manger?
To empathize with man he put on the garb of flesh yet was treated a stranger.

The same God rode on a donkey and reached out to the outcasts and the lowly.

Freedom from Rome and a leader to guide was sought by the Jews.
But an issue much darker God addressed when He let his son become the accused.

For since Adam, sin along with death reigned supreme;
shackled with no remedy we were slaves and salvation a distant dream.

So Christ bore our pain, our guilt and sin.
Prophecy told, its price could only be paid by him; a losing battle He did win.

The broken, the bruised, the affluent and leaders, Him followed;
and for the world even the ungrateful, the cup of God's wrath he swallowed.

What we want may not always be what we need.
We seek the ephemeral but for the cry for longing hearts Christ did bleed.

We treasure this miracle, it fuels our hope,
Especially when in the darkness we grope.

For unto us a child is born unto us a son is given
This gift is not what we deserve but comes from grace unbidden.

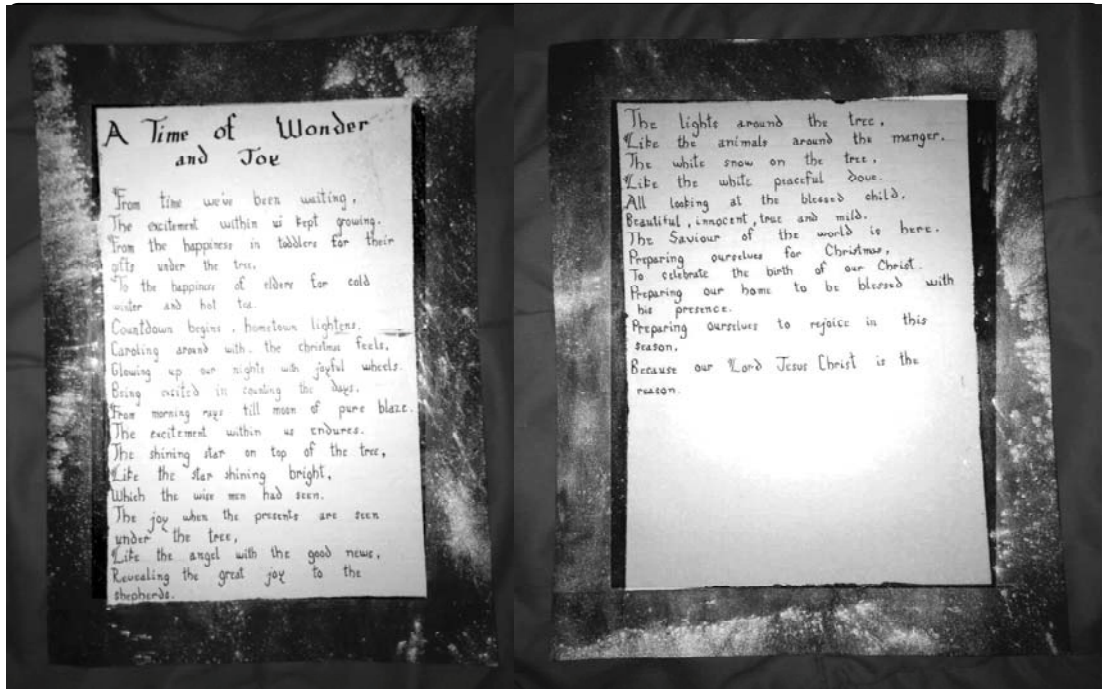
Ms. Beulah Supriya is a science graduate with a love for the arts.

A Time of Wonder and Joy

-A. Suchitra



Ms. A. Suchitra is a Senior Sunday school student at St. John's church and is pursuing her Intermediate second year.



Messiah's Rendezvous with Humankind

While David's star lit up the sky,
In Bethlehem, one winter night,
From a manger, an Infant's cry,
Among the darkness, was joyful, bright.
Like a victor's song it rung,
Among the faithful blessed ones.
And from God's abode above,
If you listened close enough,
You'd hear divine music unwind
A song celebrating the start
Of Messiah's Rendezvous with humankind.



Gondi Annie Spoorthi

For years, God's Son spread out the Word
And in the end, gave up his life
The line of death did he blur
To end our pain and strife.
He died for a bigger reason too,
So to make sure that humankind
Fails not its heavenly rendezvous
With its Savior Jesus Christ.

Ms. Gondi Annie Spoorthi, is studying at Johnson Grammar School, ISC, in the M.P.C. stream.



Senior Citizens Day Felicitations.

Christmas Puzzle

Mrs. Ramya Champion

Items having to do with Christmas are found among these letters. The names may be read forward, backward, up, down or diagonally. Draw a line around each word as you find it.

Checklist for Puzzle

Angles	Inn	Shepherds
Babc	Jcsus	Stable
Bethlehem	Joseph	Star
Christmas	Judaca	Swaddling Cloths
Donkey	King Herod	Taxes
Egypt	Manger	Virgin
Flight	Mary	Wise men
Frankincense	Messiah	
Galilee	Myrrh	
Gold	Nazareth	
Holy Ghost	Saviour	

F	A	R	N	Q	C	H	N	J	E	S	U	S	B	M	N	E	P	O	R	I	Y
I	R	M	A	O	N	M	I	X	G	K	O	T	R	Y	A	G	D	N	A	B	A
B	L	A	X	S	I	U	E	T	Y	N	A	G	C	N	T	N	Z	H	V	O	R
V	K	G	N	I	G	L	H	T	P	R	M	O	N	S	D	R	G	L	N	U	S
R	T	S	I	K	R	N	B	O	T	Z	B	I	N	N	A	D	A	E	S	X	F
M	J	I	M	S	I	G	Y	C	S	E	P	M	E	E	S	B	M	M	R	W	H
C	N	W	B	T	V	N	P	S	E	C	E	A	R	F	P	E	A	C	E	A	T
R	U	O	I	V	A	S	C	L	S	H	F	E	H	L	S	T	I	J	R	G	O
Z	R	H	P	D	O	T	I	E	N	R	S	I	W	I	I	H	A	M	S	V	L
B	E	P	A	M	K	L	O	H	N	I	E	A	W	G	Z	L	U	M	D	A	C
S	L	E	G	N	A	S	A	K	U	S	Z	P	E	H	T	E	B	A	B	N	G
T	R	S	N	G	U	I	L	A	G	T	E	I	L	T	I	H	M	I	T	N	N
A	M	O	U	C	S	P	K	T	Z	M	A	R	Y	O	M	E	P	Q	D	O	I
B	E	J	X	S	D	O	O	H	G	A	N	N	E	L	G	M	U	T	U	D	L
L	W	O	E	H	B	Q	R	A	T	S	U	F	T	R	O	N	S	S	I	Z	D
E	B	M	C	A	I	P	V	O	N	M	C	S	N	Y	E	K	N	O	D	R	D
N	I	K	I	N	G	H	E	R	O	D	A	Q	J	A	X	P	Z	H	A	W	A
N	T	C	O	R	M	T	E	A	L	U	V	T	U	Y	H	N	T	G	D	A	W
A	A	S	L	G	Y	K	S	O	Y	G	N	E	D	N	I	R	A	Y	N	F	S
O	X	U	E	E	R	D	G	A	H	T	E	R	A	Z	A	N	S	L	M	I	T
J	E	U	E	K	R	P	R	A	Y	Q	X	I	E	M	K	Z	E	O	L	P	K
P	S	D	R	E	H	P	E	H	S	T	G	H	A	F	K	S	E	H	L	A	I

Confirmed Members of St. Johns' Church. Secunderabad - 2018



Confirmation-2018 Solemnized by The Rt.Rev Dr A C Solomon Raj, Bishop in Medak Diocese

NEWLY CONFIRMED MEMBERS AT CSI CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, SECUNDERABAD. 02 DECEMBER, 2018 AT 8:30 AM SERVICE							
1 ST ROW TOP	AKANKSH PRASAD TATINENI	ARYAN CHANDRAKANTH PUTLA	EZEKIEL LALDINMAWIA SWARANJIT SEN	CHETNA PRASAD	JASON JAYAKAR SAGADAM		
2 ND ROW MIDDLE	PETER EMMANUEL CHINTHAMALLA	PRESLEY SADANAND CHAVADI	ARMAAN ABRAHAM JETTI	SUSAN SHOURY RAJ SABBINENI	PALEPU VISHNU	JESSE SUNEETH BENJAMIN	KRIPAKARAN JAGADISHAN
3 RD ROW BOTTOM	CHERYL DEON KATTA	JENNIFER HADASSAH CHINTHAMALLA	AISHWARYA KOPPULA	PRASANTH PAPARAO BURGULA	JOSHUA MANUEL ANISH		

Christmas Social - Snippets of Christmas Regale



Christmas Social – “F.O.G – Force Of God” presented by Youth, St. John’s Church.



Little Jewels Shining for Christ – Sunday School performance, during Christmas Social



Christmas Social – Men’s Fellowship presentation in collaboration with Families.



Sunday Evening Worshipers chipping in their glorious melodies – Christmas Social

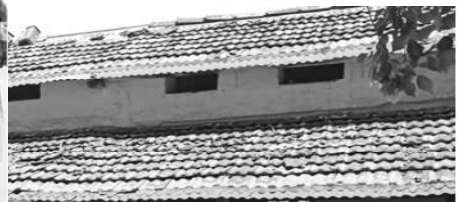


“Rose Buds” of Women’s Fellowship dazzling in Pink & Green performing during Christmas Social.

Outreach program by Church members

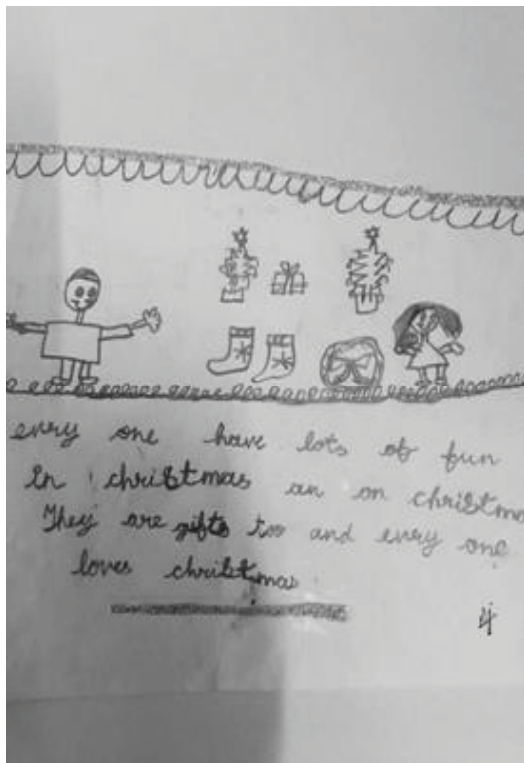


Handing over a cheque for Rs. 32000 for repair of the roof for a school in Wadiaram





-Jane Andrea John - Juniors



Ashton

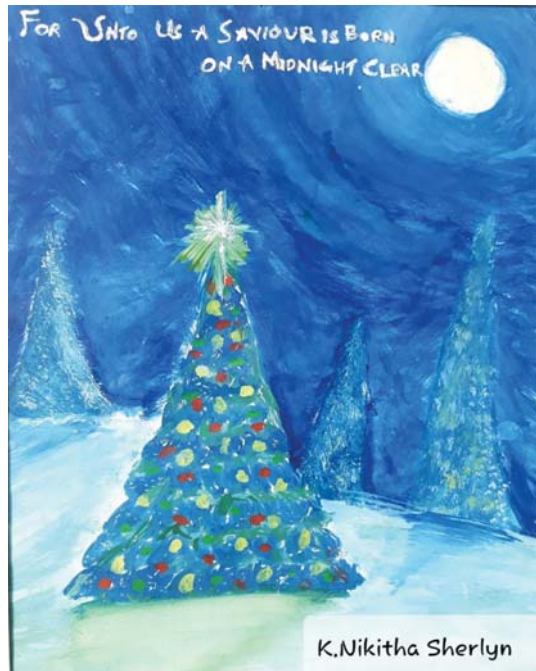
Graceful - 9 Lessons Candle Light Service by
dedicated choir of St. John's Church



The "9 Lessons Candle Light Service"



Our dedicated and long serving Sexton
Mr.Philip & family.



St. John's Carolites



To Care for Those Who Once Cared for Us is One of The Highest Honors



Joyce Thompson

We honored our members that have weathered the storms of life for more than 80 years but have never quit and have been victorious.

We showed our appreciation to all the super seniors for many years of service to the Lord, for their positive attitude and happy smiles, many years of teaching, serving on committees and leadership in the life of the church. Because of their rich experience, expertise, and dedication to life, all SEENAGERS (Senior Teenagers) deserved to be recognized.

Prior to the big day, we visited few super seniors who were unable to move around, at their homes along with Reverend Muthanayagam and the men's fellowship families. We spent time talking to them, recorded few videos of super seniors especially their valuable advice to the younger generation of the church, clicked beautiful pictures and enjoyed every moment with them and we have loads of beautiful memories stored within our hearts.

To summarize, the youth sang a beautiful song and while the Sunday school children enacted the biblical characters that God used in their old age, the super seniors guessed the characters within seconds. They were all so lively sharing their memories about the church and their childhood memories and very energetic to guess the hymns when hummed. We were

extremely happy to felicitate all our super seniors who could make it their day as a token of our gratitude.

Our guest speaker Mr. Adam Swarup addressed the super seniors about God's advice to older men and women.

- Moses was 80 when God called him to lead Israel. He gave many excuses but age was not one of them. **Don't underestimate your capability.**

- Caleb was 40 years when God promised him his inheritance. He waited 45 years patiently to claim his promise. **It is never too late to claim your promise from God.**

- Anna was in the advanced years. She was widowed in her teens but kept her faith till the '80s and **waited upon the Lord.**

- John Wesley traveled 2,50,000 miles on horseback or on foot to preach. He preached 40,000 sermons, written 400 books, mastered 10 languages. At 83 years of age, he was annoyed that he could not write for more than 15 hours a day. At 86 he was ashamed that he could not preach more than two sermons a day. He hated that he is not able to get up from bed before 5:30 am because of his age.

What advice does the bible give to older men and women?

- Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, sound in love and sound in perseverance.

- Older women are to be reverent in their behavior, no malicious gossip and teach what is good.

· Older people have the Strength, Stability, and Wisdom

o Leviticus 19:32 - Honor the aged grey-headed

o Job 12:12 - Wisdom is with the aged, with long life is understanding

o Psalm 71 - And when I am old and grey, do not forsake me until I declare your strength to this generation.

· Older people have spiritual experience, spiritual strength, spiritual endurance, and Spiritual Wisdom.

o There is no value in growing old if you are not godly.

o Older women have to set an example and teach younger women as to what is good.

And finally some tips from our esteemed speaker to the super seniors were given:

- Look forward to tomorrow
- Do simple exercises
- Do crosswords and puzzles
- Spend time on the internet
- Listen to Christian radio stations
- Get covered by medical insurance
- Cook or do gardening
- Travel if you can
- Draw your family tree
- Teach or preach the word of god
- Be an active member of the church
- Help those who are in need - comfort them

I thank God Almighty for the encouraging message which Mr. Adam Swarup had shared with us.

We pray and assure to you all SEENAGERS that we would cling on to the advice given to us of honoring our elders and taking care of them and be children of the Word and light.

We the Church of St John the Baptist, want to take time to say a **BIG THANK YOU** for your “contribution to growth of the Church over the years” and we all church family **LOVE YOU**.

Brains of older people are slow because they know so much. People do not decline mentally with age, it just takes them longer enough to recall facts because they have more information in their brains, scientists believe. Much like a computer struggles as the hard drive gets full, so do humans take longer to access information when their brains are full. The human brain works slower in old age, said Dr. Michael Ramscar, but only because we have stored more information over time the brains of older people do not get weak. On the contrary, they simply know more.

Also, older people often go to another room to get something and when they get there, they stand there wondering what they came for. It is NOT a memory problem; it is nature’s way of making older people do more exercise.

What does the Bible say about?

Old age- Due honor should be given to the elderly. Leviticus 19:32, “Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God.”

About Wisdom of older people-Job 12:12 Wisdom belongs to the aged, and understanding to the old.

About strength- Joshua 14:10 “And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these 45 years ... and now, lo, I am this day 85 years old. As yet I am as strong

this day ...as my strength was then, even so, is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in...”

About Grandchildren-Proverbs 17:6 “Children’s children are the crown of old men...”

About long life-

· Psalms 91:14, 16 because he hath set his love upon me ... because he hath known my name... With long life will I satisfy him.

· Exodus 20:12 “Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land”

· 1 Kings 3:14 “And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments ... I will lengthen thy days.”

· Proverbs 9:10, 11 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.”

· Proverbs 3:1, 2, 16 “My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments ... For the length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee ...”

· Isaiah 46:4 And I will still be carrying you when you are old. Your hair will turn grey, and I will still carry you. I made you, and I will carry you to safety · Proverbs 16:31 [Grey hair is a crown of glory](#); it is obtained by following a righteous path.

My personal Testimony:

I thank God for giving me an opportunity to honor our dearest seniors for this program as it has been a great blessing to me and I personally thank every member who has contributed in their own way towards this program.

Through this program, the Lord taught me

many in-depth revelations of his word. The Lord Almighty helped me, guided me, lead me to the right people to receive help within the time. All I had to do was surrender everything in the hands of the Lord and he made everything possible.

The interactions with all the super seniors were informative, heartwarming, loving and knowing few seniors’ personal circumstances and situations were heart-rending. In a few situations tears just rolled down my eyes while listening to their sad life stories.

Peter said Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to **serve others**, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms (1Peter 4:10)

Matthew 25: 35-40 Jesus said ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’³⁸When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

⁴⁰ “Jesus replied, ‘Truly I tell you, **whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.**’

I wish and hope that we as church family and during this Advent season await and rendezvous with the Lord strengthen each one of us to make a difference in the lives of that humankind especially to the needy and those who are suffering. Through us let the Lord touch the lives of many and let

us all make this our resolution for the coming year.

Ms Joyce Thompson is a Sunday school teacher and is active in various church programs.



Acquire the Fire Competition



Ms. Nikhita prize winner for English singing competition



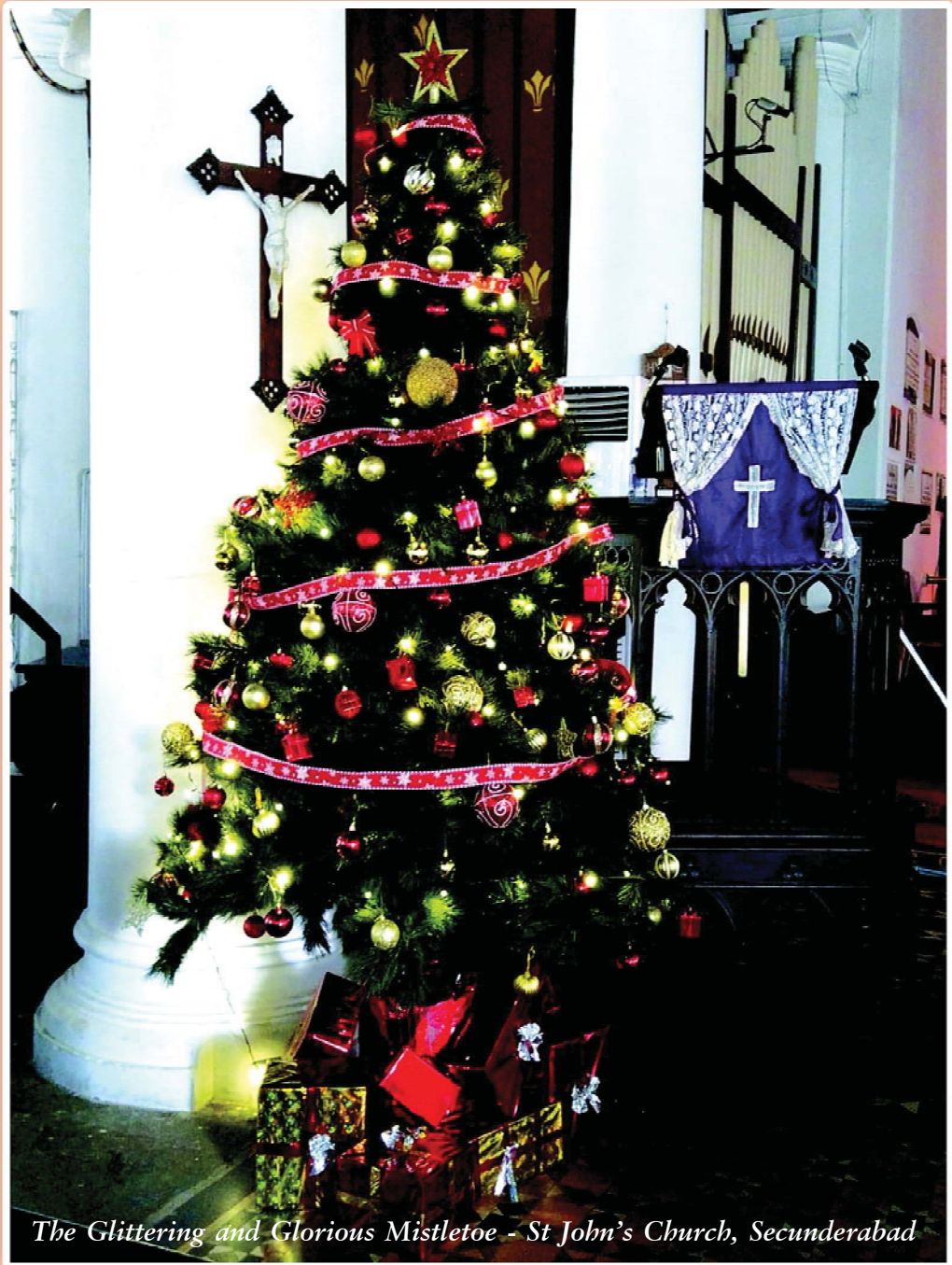
Mrs. Sujatha prize winner for Telugu singing



*Dr Carol Ann Reddy - first prize winner for CRAFT
in ACQUIRE THE FIRE competition .*



*Dr. NIRMALA PRABHAKAR - first prize
winner in KINDLING THOUGHTS.*



The Glittering and Glorious Mistletoe - St John's Church, Secunderabad

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Greetings and Compliments of the Season
***A Merry Christmas 2018 &
A Blessed New Year 2019***

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