

## Christmas 2012

### Jesus

***Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. <sup>20</sup> But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."*** Matthew 1:18-21

Beloved in The Lord.

Today as we celebrate Christmas let us think about the name given to Jesus. The name Jesus means he saves. This is clearly told to us in our foundation text. The angel that appeared to Joseph told him very clearly:

***"You shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins."***

So here we not only have a clear indication of His name, but also of His mission.

Jesus came into the world to save people from sin, death and the Devil.

Jesus said: ***"for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send The Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."***

Here in a few verses we have the Gospel in a nutshell. Here we have the message of Christmas, and the message of Easter combined.

Jesus Christ, whose birthday we celebrate tonight is God's gift of love and grace to all mankind.

He is the Saviour.

That night when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, there were Shepherds tending their sheep in the surrounding hills. We read in Luke's account: 2:8-11

***<sup>8</sup> In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; <sup>11</sup> for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.***

The good news was preached to the Shepherds out in the field. At that time Shepherds were ranked very low in society. By proclaiming the news of Jesus birth to this lowly Shepherds God was sending a very clear message - namely - Salvation is for all people.

It is of the utmost importance that we understand this vital truth. There is only one way to Almighty God and that way is the same for all people irrespective of race, skin colour, income, prestige, or anything else.

We read in Acts 4:12

***And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."***

These also rate amongst the most important words you will ever hear. There is salvation in no other name, because no other name is given by which we can be saved. Full stop. No debate, no discussion, no ifs and buts. There is salvation in no other. Jesus and Jesus alone saves. Jesus name is the only name that we can call upon for salvation.

This is in complete harmony with what Jesus taught in teaching about heaven. We hear these words at every funeral: John 14:1-6

***"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. <sup>4</sup> And you know the way where I am going."*** <sup>5</sup> Thomas \*said to Him, ***"Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?"*** <sup>6</sup> Jesus \*said to him, ***"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.***

What I really love about God 's Word is that we are never left wondering. It is stated so clearly that there is no room for misunderstanding. There is no room for philosophising. Jesus states the truth very clearly.

We will not be able to excuse ourselves and say: "I didn't know!" No one told me clearly. Today you have heard the truth loud and clear. The only way to God is Jesus Christ. The only truth is Jesus Christ. Life is only gained in Jesus Christ. There is salvation in no other - Jesus alone can save.

Out of His grace and mercy God has provided the way, the same way for all people to come to Him. His provision is universal. It is freely given to any who would come. We must receive His gift in faith.

There was an interesting event in the life of Paul and Silas. They were in a prison cell in Philippi. God sent an Angel to set them free. Their chains fell off and the prison doors swung open. The jailer waking up and seeing the doors opened grabbed a sword and was about to kill himself. Paul called out and told him not to harm himself as all the prisoners were still there. The jailer asked the most important question of all: "sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The answer that Paul and Silas give is very important. ***Believe in the Lord Jesus, And you will be saved, you and your household.***

It is just as important to note what they did not say: they did not say improve your life or join a church or give a donation. They did not say keep the commandments or do good works. They said: believe in The Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

Faith in Jesus is the key. That is the road to freedom and life. So what does it mean to have faith in Jesus?

It means to place your trust in Him and Him alone. To realise that you are a sinner and that you deserve eternal death. There is nothing that you can do to save yourself. Understand that Jesus died in your place, He took your punishment, He shed His blood for you. Trust in Him for your salvation.

When you do you are saved. You have your name written in the Book of Life. Jesus himself takes up residence in your heart. Your life is transformed. You are free. Those things that used to enslave you, bind you no longer do.

Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 5:17

***Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.***

This my beloved friends is the good news of Christmas. God loves you so very much. He is giving you an opportunity to be free. To be cleansed from all your sin, past present and future. You can live the rest of your life honouring Him.

The world is rapidly getting more evil. Every day we read of new lows. There is only one solution. That is The Lord Jesus Christ.

When the shepherds heard the news of Jesus birth that hurried to Bethlehem to worship Him.

Today you have clearly heard the Gospel. The good news. What will you do?

My prayer is that you would come to Jesus. Place everything into His loving hands. You will experience not only a blessed and happy Christmas but you will also experience life at it's very best, here and in eternity.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.