



THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT OF ALL...
The Birth of our Savior

2018

Christmas is just around the corner and we can see the anticipation everywhere. In front of homes, all over town and in stores brightly decorated for the Holidays; in the newspapers, magazines and on the internet advertising where we can buy and find great deals on gifts; on the radio with some stations playing Christmas music all day long... or so it seems! And on television, especially on the Hallmark channel which started airing their 'countdown to Christmas' movies on October 27th this year!

Oh, I can't deny that I am excited about the Holiday Season with its Christmas cheer and festivities, but I must admit that I am also a bit overwhelmed with the logistics of it all. Choosing and shopping for gifts for our loved ones, sending emails and cards expressing our heartfelt wishes to the people we appreciate, decorating our home inside and out, planning and preparing the Christmas meal which this year will be at our home, all take time and effort. But when everything is said and done, it'll be all worthwhile... Watching the smiling faces, the excitement while opening gifts and the love everyone shares for one another will be priceless. But amidst all that busyness and cheer, am I forgetting the true meaning of Christmas?..

As I walked through the streets of my little neighborhood this morning, I was reminded of a story I read recently of a little girl who's passing out the presents to her family on Christmas morning. After finding gifts for each member of her family, she was puzzled that there wasn't a gift for the One whose birth was being celebrated. *"I guess everyone forgot about Jesus..."* she said.

It's so easy to miss Christmas...the true meaning of Christmas, isn't it?.. We can get so preoccupied with the mundane and the commercial side of it that we accept it as the norm and don't hesitate to jump on the bandwagon and join the others that are already on board... Some of us take it as a ritual. They're lost in the midst of religion and ceremonies but have no personal relationship with the One whose birth is being celebrated... There are those who believe in Him but hesitate to totally open their hearts to Him. They are afraid of losing control, of having to give up their own plans or to change their lifestyle... And we have the ones who are skeptical or totally indifferent. They simply don't care or don't believe in one of the most enduring stories of all times...the birth of a child born in a stable, worshiped by shepherds and three wise men who then became a man, did the miraculous, claimed to be God Himself and came to save humanity from their sins.

I understand that this is the season to exchange gifts, share meals with loved ones and build sweet family memories which is a great thing, but it's so much more than that... It's a time to celebrate the birth of someone quite exceptional who came on this earth to accomplish an astonishing mission. At some point, he may have been a baby lying in a manger, he may have grown up as a normal child, he may have felt the same emotions as we do and experienced the same life's exigencies as we know them, but he was very different in that he was the SON OF GOD.

His mission of redeeming humanity from its sinful nature wasn't an easy one to accomplish. He knew beforehand what it entailed; that he would be misunderstood, mistreated and at the end he would pay with his own life, hanging on a cross. However, because of his amazing love for humanity, he accepted his mission willfully, selflessly...

As I celebrate Christmas, I don't want to remember Him as 'little baby Jesus' born in a manger but as the Son of God, my Savior, the Lord of lords and the King of kings. And it's with great joy in my heart that I want to celebrate not only on Christmas day but every day of the year, his birth, his life, his death and his resurrection!

May this Christmas be a time of great celebration for you and your family. But for those who have lost a loved one or have a family member in the military who will not be able to join you this Holiday Season, I pray that you will find comfort in the presence of family and friends... For those who will be alone this Christmas, I pray that God will bless you in a very special way.

During this Holiday Season, I wouldn't want to forget the less fortunate, the homeless and those who really need a Christmas miracle in their lives. My husband and I will do our part in trying to make their Christmas a little brighter this year, but we mostly ask God to meet their deepest needs, and to give them hope and faith.

I want to end here with excerpts of this great Christmas carol that I hope we all can sing from the bottom of our hearts and at the top of our lungs!

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room...*

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns...

*He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love.*

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