

Article of the Month
December, 2017

— ***Do You Believe It?*** —

For good reason, the whole world is in turmoil, terror, torture, trembling, and tribulation. We don't want to minimize the legitimate concerns that people are experiencing. But we also want to stress the *peace* that every true child of God should have in the midst of these stressful times. It all comes down to whether or not our *faith* is real or just professed.

This is the month that the Christian world celebrates the birth of Messiah. While the date is certainly inaccurate, the appropriateness of acknowledging and rejoicing in this event should be obvious. Even the angels rejoiced when he was born! There is a reason we say

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

The promises which come out of this event — the first advent of Christ — are significant and exciting to the extreme. Of course, celebrating Jesus' birth is important only because it began a chain of events which will result in the coming of "the desire of all nations." We surely must be much more excited about the *second* advent of Christ.

Christmas cards, singing, and all kinds of visual and audio outlets mark this season with little pieces of Scripture which should lodge in our hearts and put our minds at ease regarding the horrible things which beset our current civilization. Reviewing these phrases from Scripture should excite our hunger for the nearness of the Kingdom for which Jesus was born. As long as we **believe** these words, the current distresses can almost be disregarded!

THE SURE WORDS OF GOD:

Luke 2:10

"I bring to you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people."

"Good news" is hard to find these days! And this news is about GREAT JOY. That, too, is in short supply these days. And note: this great joy will be for ALL THE PEOPLE. Messiah's kingdom will not be exclusive, but inclusive.

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He will fulfill the promise made to Abraham: “In thy seed [that’s Christ] shall ALL THE FAMILIES of the earth be blessed.” **Do you believe it?**

Luke 2:14

“...and on earth, peace, goodwill toward man.”

Not just in heaven, but on earth will the joys be found. Peace is good! But it is in this text augmented by GOODWILL toward men. Everything will work together toward each individual human to insure that the will of God and of men will conspire to give that internal peace which we all desire. **Do you believe it?**

Isaiah 2:2-4

“Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills, and all the nations will stream to it. And many people will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.’ For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.”

This promise is so cherished that a part of it is carved into the stones of the United Nations headquarters in New York City. We can suspect that they do not really believe it! They can’t help, however, finding it inspiring. The promise shows that the Lord’s kingdom or government, symbolized as a mountain, will take charge over all nations on the face of the earth, and that all people will want to reap the blessings it promises. Clearly, Jesus’ birth will ultimately end all international strife. **Do you believe it?**

Isaiah 9:6, 7

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on his shoulders. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace — on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will accomplish this.”

The birth of Jesus two millennia ago has yet to see its objective reached. Government will rest on him, not on imperfect elected, appointed or usurping men. His character will insure perfect government. His “counsel” will be without flaw — even full of “wonder” for its wisdom! He, as a Divine being, will have all of the power needed to carry out his assigned duties. He will give new life to the human race and, thus, be their new eternal father (or life-giver). His rule will

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bring both internal and external peace. And, as God promised David that his kingship will find an eternal place, so God shall fulfill through Jesus, as David's son and heir, that that promise will be fulfilled in a measure far beyond King David's ability to imagine. And, note its foundations: JUSTICE and RIGHTEOUSNESS. Are these not two of the most fundamental desires that we all have? Perfect justice will quell all of the demonstrations which beg for equity. Perfect righteousness will eliminate nearly everything which now creates discomfort, anxiety, and fear. And this kingdom will be "from then on forever." Talk about stability! And, as if to make certain we have no doubts, the prophecy is sealed up with the promise: "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will accomplish this." Just the words, "The Lord of Hosts," are so encouraging. God is Lord of the masses — the hordes of billions of humanity. He is NOT the Lord of the few and the privileged! All of this prophecy demands our admiration. **Do you believe it?**

Isaiah 11:3, 4

"And he will delight in the fear of the Lord; and he will not judge by what his eyes see, nor make a decision by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he will judge the poor and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth."

The new King Jesus will uphold with reverence the standards of his Father. Unlike the imperfect judgments by men, he will not lead us by appearance or by rumors. His judging of man's progress toward perfection will be a perfectly righteous judgment. No longer will the poor and afflicted be looked at for their poverty and circumstances. With Jesus there will be no respect of persons. No one will "pull rank" because of breeding, rank, possessions, or influence. Can we even imagine how many societal ills this will correct? **Do you believe it?**

Isaiah 11:6-9

"And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid. And the calf and the young lion will feed together. And a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze; their young will lie down together; and the lion will eat straw like the ox. And the nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. They will not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

This text was the basis of many "Peaceable Kingdom" paintings in the 19th Century. It is not difficult to see why it would inspire artists and their patrons! The poetic meaning is clear. ALL of nature will be made to conform to the conditions necessary for a human, earth-wide, paradise. While the text doesn't specify earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts, and all other such tragedies, their elimination is surely included in the one phrase: "They will not hurt nor destroy

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in all my holy mountain.” The promise that perfect knowledge will fill the earth eliminates prejudices, mistakes, misconceptions, and everything that might mar the beauty of a perfect society. **Do you believe it?**

Matthew 6:10

“Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.”

These words are the prayer of nearly every Christian and Christian congregation in the world. By them, Jesus summarized the entire purpose for his birth. **Do you believe it?**

Isaiah 35:1, 5, 6, 8-10

“And the desert will rejoice and blossom as the rose;...Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy;...And a highway shall be there...the Highway of Holiness;...No lions will be there, nor will any vicious beast go up on it;...but the redeemed will walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy; and sorrow and sighing will flee away.”

Earth is to have a rebirth of fruitfulness. Waste places will be unknown. There will be no want for abundant healthful foods. All of man’s traditional maladies will disappear — no blindness, deafness, lameness. Nothing (not real beasts, nor the symbolic beasts of corruption, selfishness, etc.) will cause difficulty in walking up the road to perfection. And the dead will return — not to fear and foreboding, but with joyful shoutings and with the spirit of joy in their hearts as they come to this new government which will cleanse them and lead them to eternal living in a perfect environment. By the time the process is complete, any sign of sorrow and sighing will not be a part of mankind’s experience. This is why Jesus was born. **Do you believe it?**

Jeremiah 31:34

“And they will not teach again each man his brother saying, ‘Know the Lord?’ For they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them...for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

We have seen previously that the knowledge of God and His ways will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. This verse reiterates the thought. But it inspiringly adds that God will be in the “forgetting mood.” All of what has been done in the previous life will be forgiven and forgotten as man reaches perfection. A clear conscience will be the inheritance of every man. **Do you believe it?**

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Ephesians 1:8-10

“...So abundant was God’s grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us, when He made known to us the secret of His will. And this is in harmony with God’s merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it — the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in him.”

This passage is quoted from Weymouth’s superb translation. It is an inspiring summary of what we have seen as the meaning and purpose behind Christ’s having been sent to earth — first to die, then to reign. This makes “Christmas” come alive! The Ephesians text shows that God has kept these beautiful things a “secret.” With the exception of revealing it to His true Church, He has kept it as something “cherished in His own mind.” And it involves restoring the whole world and giving it a new government “when the times are ripe for it.” They DO seem to be getting pretty ripe! This text summarizes the objective of the “Lord’s Prayer” (Matthew 6:10). It also summarizes the inner (even if not comprehended) desire of all mankind. **Do you believe it?**

IF WE BELIEVE IT, we are among the most blessed of individuals. We have a peace which passes understanding. We are not moved by economics, politics, religious falsehoods, and social atrocities. We KNOW the answers. Our *faith* overcomes all that our senses perceive — all that would normally deeply trouble a human being. Knowing the above, and believing it, we can with full assurance say to you,

Merry Christmas!