



December 1, 2011

## H.I.S. Ministries December 2011 Newsletter, covering November 2011

**We wish you a blessed Christmas filled with love and joy of the Lord.**

### **What is the meaning of Christmas?**

Is it gifts we give and receive? Is it decorations we bring out to brighten our homes to make them more festive? Is it special foods we prepare for family and friends?

This is what the world and worldly see that Christmas is. Calling this time a “*Christmas celebration*” has made the world at large (unbelievers) uncomfortable and they want to eliminate “*Christmas*” altogether and just call it a *Holiday*.

The world truly wants to take Christ out of Christmas.

### **What is the meaning of Christmas to us who claim to be His followers?**

**We need to stop and think:** How do we as believers in Jesus celebrate Christmas?

Is there any difference?

Even though we can celebrate His Birthday similarly – with gifts, decorations and foods, **to us this is a very special season to honor Him in all that we do, with every gift we make or buy for our loved ones, when we decorate our homes, when we prepare special foods, we keep our hearts focused on Him. We do all this to honor Him who’s Birthday we celebrate. It is His birth that made our salvation possible. Our hope and life is in Him.**

*“But thou, Bethlehem Eph-ra-tah, though thou be little among thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting.” (Micah 5:2.)*

What Micah wrote in the Old Testament about 700 years before the birth of Messiah, became a reality in September, 2 B.C., most likely not in December that has been set aside as a time to celebrate His birth. Scholars who have studied this carefully from other known historical sources have pinpointed our Lord’s birth to the 29<sup>th</sup> of September, 2 B.C.

Regardless of whether we know the exact date of Jesus’ birth, what is important to know is that **He was born for us**, and that we understand the profound importance of that fact.

Isaiah, who was related to the Royal Family of Judah, has recorded the life of king Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26), and his own prophetic call (Isa. 6:1) in the year when king Uzziah died (740 B.C.). The Book of Isaiah is a Messianic Book. We can learn more about our Lord in

Isaiah's writings than even from the New Testament. More than 700 years before the Birth of Christ, Isaiah wrote:

*"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."* (Isa. 9:6-7.)

Indeed, He is the Mighty God. He is all that scripture says He is.

In His first coming He came to offer salvation as God's gift to all who come to Him. When He comes again, He comes as a Judge of the world that has rejected Him.

He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:11-16.) He will sit on David's Throne and rule forever and ever as was promised to Mary. (Luke 1:31-33.)

The world pictures Yeshua/Jesus as a physically beautiful man who gives all who follow Him the gift of eternal life. And He does give eternal life to all who repent and come to Him for salvation, but we do not get that image as the world has of His person from Isaiah, who writes about Him (Isa. 53:1-4) in these words:

*"1. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? 2. For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form or comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. 3. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. 4. Surely He hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."*

Isaiah asks: *"Who has believed our report?"* and by this he draws attention to the lack of faith people have in God's Word and message. Messiah was rejected, His person was refused, and to human observation, the Davidic line had ended, thus it was like "a dry ground". His mission was not understood, He was humiliated, and they did not see any "beauty or comeliness" or anything "kingly" in His person for men to admire or "desire Him" (v. 2). Men still want to *hide their faces from Him*, but His suffering and death alone brings appeasement between God and man (vss. 3-4).

Isaiah continued: *"5. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of your peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. 6. All like sheep are gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. 7. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as sheep before her shears is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. 8. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken. 9. And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. 10. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. 11. He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many: for He shall bear their iniquities. 12. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong: because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."* (Isa. 53:5-12.)

Our guilt and sin is what causes us to want to hide our faces and not look at His sufferings He took in our place, for our *sins were laid* on Him (vss. 4-6). Some have thought that verse 5 means that He paid for our sicknesses and that our illnesses are healed through His

sufferings (v. 5). It does not say that. Of course God can heal anyone He wants to heal, according to His will and purposes, but we need to realize that there have been thousands upon thousands of faithful followers of Christ who were not healed from their illnesses. What God promises is to forgive our sins if we come to Him through Jesus, who took our sins upon Him on the cross. Verse 5 says that He took God's wrath for all our sins in our place. *He was wounded for our transgressions (our sins), He was bruised for our iniquities (our wrongs); the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.* God's forgiveness brings spiritual healing and peace with God.

When we carefully read all of Chapter 53 of Isaiah, we can be certain that Jesus was *the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world* (John 1:19). He went as a lamb to the slaughter, He did not open His mouth in His defense, because He went to the cross in our place and we were guilty – we had *all gone astray, the Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all* (vss. 6-7).

He was taken to an illegitimate trial, held in the middle of the night, which was against the Law, and He was *cut off out of the land of the living*. He suffered a violent death seemingly by decisions of others, but the fact is that He willingly laid down His life for our sins (v. 8). *"He made His grave with the wicked"* (He was crucified and He died between two thieves), *"and with the rich in His death"* (v. 9) is a reference to His burial in a tomb of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27:57-60). Looking at verses 5 and 10 together makes it clear that Messiah's death was according to the foreordained plan of God as the payment of *our iniquities*, so that we who believe in Him, can *become children of God, His seed* (v. 10) through our faith in His finished work for us. (John 1:12-13; Gal. 3:26-29.)

*"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God"* (Rom. 10:17). When we submit ourselves to the *righteousness of Christ, He will justify and bear our iniquities* (v. 11). His righteousness will then be applied to us even though we have no righteousness of our own. (Rom. 10:1-4.)

Isaiah 53 ends (v. 12) with glorification and exaltation of our Lord Jesus. (See also Phil. 2:9.) *"He poured out His soul unto death"*, carries a meaning that He gave Himself and died in our behalf. His *"intercession for the transgressors"* is a reference to His High Priestly work as our one and *only Mediator before the Father* (1 Tim. 2:5). If we are *in Him* (i.e. have been born again) we have guaranteed acceptance before God. *"There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."* (Rom. 8:1.) Our salvation is secure and we can *know now that we have eternal life.* (1 John 5:13.)

Let us worship Him with true understanding of His great love for us and share His gospel with all whom we meet.

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**From our mailbox:** In our two last Newsletters (October and November) we gave **our answers to points 1-3** of 8 rebuttals two Mormon missionaries had sent us about 2 months ago concerning our booklet, *"The Truth About Mormonism"*, where we deal with doctrinal contradictions between **Mormonism and Biblical Christianity.**

Their points of arguments were taken from pages 37-40, where we specifically show that **even the Book of Mormon contradicts today's Mormonism.**

Their points of disagreements were:

1. *"Polygamy – (in defense of)"*
2. *"Eternal progression"*
3. *"Secret Combinations"*
4. *"Creation or organization?"*
5. *"One God or many Gods?"*
6. *"Work for the dead"*
7. *"Temples"*
8. *"Eternal marriage"*

We responded to all 8 points right away. They have not written back – so obviously they have lost their zeal.

I will continue here (as we had promised to do) letting you know how we answered these points. **This time we answer points 4 and 5** and we will continue in the next couple of newsletters till we have given answers to all 8 points they addressed.

[They took the subtitle “*Creation or organization?*” from our list, only saying that they disagreed, but they did not elaborate - just mentioned that *it needed further research...* (by them, I assume.)]

**My reply:**

4. “*Creation or organization?*” – you did not say what you meant by this, but I can assure you that the **God of the Bible created the entire universe by His Word - all of it – out of nothing.** It was Joseph Smith who later said that **God did not create anything out of nothing, but organized the world out of existing matter.** (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 350.) Smith’s teaching is false, and contradicted his own earlier teachings!

5. “*One God or many Gods?*”

**You wrote:** “*Your neighbors have a Father, not your Father though. There are other gods, but [our] Heavenly Father is the God of us all, so we have nothing to do with those other gods, at least at this time. Ps. 136:2 and Deut. 10:17. Again I would encourage you to read the Bible all the way through and you will be able to see that this LDS church does contain the fullness of the everlasting gospel.*”

**My reply:** Your explanation has nothing to do with answering this question: ***Is there one God*** (as the Bible teaches, and the Book of Mormon agrees) ***or many gods*** (as today’s Mormonism teaches.). Your explanation simply is not a reasonable explanation at all.

(You avoided the issue that the Book of Mormon teaches that there is no other gods. You did not comment on Joseph Smith’s teaching of “*plurality of Gods*”.) **There is only one True God, but there were thousands upon thousands of false gods** that pagans worshipped and believed in, as there are in our day too. The verses you refer to are just saying that simple truth: **The true and Only God of the Bible is, of course, above all that men might call gods and desire to believe in!** The phrase “*God of gods and the Lord of lords*” (Deut. 10:17 and in Ps. 136:2) **shows the absolute exclusiveness of God. There are no other Gods!**

**God does not even know any other Gods.** (Isa. 44:8b.) So there are none! The Bible reports that non-Israelites, i.e. heathens, believed and worshipped many gods and Israel periodically fell into their practices, which was the reason why they were sent by God into bondage under these pagan people – as in Assyria and in Babylon – and later even put under the pagan Roman government. **The idea that men can become gods originated from the Devil himself, and it was the first lie presented to mankind.** (Gen. 3:1-5.) Devil first attacked God’s Word, and caused Eve to doubt what God had said, just as **all false religions from there on have done: they have attacked the truthfulness of the Bible in order to make their contradicting doctrines believable to biblical illiterates.**

Just like the Devil first caused Eve to question ***had God really said that if they eat from that tree they will die.*** (Gen. 3:1-5) Devil promised that ***they will not surely die, but that they will be like gods.*** **Eve believed the Devil rather than God,** and that is why the whole world in under the curse that resulted from disobedience to God. That same lie, namely ***that men can become gods,*** is still believed by **Hindus, Buddhists, Mormons and the New Age** and perhaps some others. It is “***the lie***”, **that is based on the Devil’s own desire and pride.** Don’t you know that **Lucifer fell because he wanted to become a god? He had said** (see Isa. 14:12-14) that **he wants to be like the Most High.** (See also Ezekiel 28:13-19.)

The New Testament warns us about “***doctrines of devils***”. (1 Tim. 4:1) The # 1 doctrine of the devil is that **men can become gods. Another dangerous demonic doctrine taught in Mormonism is that Jesus is not God but our elder brother from preexistence, as well as a brother of Lucifer.**

***This “Jesus” is “another Jesus” (2 Cor. 11:4, 13-15), same name but different identity!***  
 (Mormonism contradicts the Book of Mormon in this and other today’s teachings.)  
 Mormonism teaches (3<sup>rd</sup> Article of Faith) that the ***gospel is laws and ordinances of the LDS Church***, when the Bible says that ***there are no laws or ordinances in the Gospel*** (Gal. 1:8-9; 2:16-21). The true gospel is DECLARED in 1 Cor. 15:1-4 saying that ***we are saved by our belief in the message of the gospel – which is that Jesus died, was buried and rose again the third day according to the scriptures. Salvation is by grace of God, as the gift of God though faith, not of works.*** (Eph. 2:8-9.) Jesus who saves ***is God – not a brother. There is no preexistence of men. Only God preexisted.*** Jesus said that ***He alone came from above*** (heaven) ***men did not.*** He also said that ***unless we believe that He is the I AM*** (God), ***we will die in our sins.*** (John 8:23-24.) If we die ***“in our sins”*** we will go to hell, not to heaven.  
 We are ***first born*** to this world as ***physical, “natural”*** beings, as Adam’s posterity. ***Our second birth is spiritual birth*** –i.e. first natural, afterwards spiritual.. (1 Cor. 15:46-47.) Mormonism has it backwards – they teach that ***we were first born to God as “spirit children”, then afterwards physical or “natural”.*** Mormons should say: Ooops! Got it wrong! –  
 However, not only does the Bible oppose these teachings, so does the Book of Mormon!

(To be continued next month with answers to points # 6 about ***Work for the dead***, point #7 about ***Temples*** and point # 8 about ***Eternal Marriage.***)

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We praise the Lord for His love and care of ***H.I.S. ministry*** that He allows us to work in. We thank Him for His provision. ***We observe miracles of God daily*** in how He takes care of the ministry and us personally. He has sent *you* to bless us in so many ways. We thank Him for each one of you who stands with us, encourages us to keep on going, regardless of hardships we have experienced. ***There is no question in our minds that we are His*** and that even though we are far from being “good”, ***we know that His goodness is covering our failures and He directs us to try to do better every day.*** The work of the Lord is accomplished through human instrumentality, and He rewards His agents which you are as you labor for His glory. ***We are so thankful that the Lord has given to us so many special friends to partner with us in prayer and even in finances – and you do all that for us without asking – we only present our needs to the Lord as His Word counsels us to do.*** (Phil. 4:6-7.)

***“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”***

Ever since we left our self-sufficient but anxious life as Mormons, and trusted our lives to Jesus, the Lord has taught us not to worry even when in all human reasoning there has been reasons to worry. We have learned to trust in Him ***in everything***, and we mean ***in everything***. Psalm 119 has been our refuge during our “wilderness testings”. (119:49-50, 71-72.) ***“Remember the word to Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, for Thy word hath quickened me...It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes. The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.”*** We have learned that indeed our ***afflictions have been for our good***, and through them we have learned to trust in God and His care. Our trials have been good for many others also who have seen God working in our lives and through our trials, have received hope for themselves as well. When we present our requests to the Lord, we do not doubt that our prayers are heard. ***We know He hears us*** and He supplies for our needs according to His will and goodness towards us.

We are asking you to pray for our friends that now need the Lord's touch in their lives – some for health problems, some because of other trials. He knows what each of these dear people need – please pray for Debbie Boggess, Max, Merridy, Jack, Claudia, Heber, Lois and Phil, Dick and Patti, Dale and Sharon, Jennifer, Rose and Dave, Bruce and his children and grandchildren – also please pray for several LDS people we are currently reasoning with that their hearts may open to God's Word and His truth.

We are often accused of hate when we present God's truth to unbelievers. Other ministries experience that too. Jan Markell of Olive Tree Ministries, commented, "***Remember, truth is the new hate speech.***" She got it right!!

We finished our Mormonism class just before Thanksgiving. We will have a Pizza-party for our class this Saturday (Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>) at our home. They all were fantastic people of the Lord. We were blessed to have them for 11 weeks. Please pray that the Lord will give them many opportunities to use their learning and then lead Mormons to Jesus of the Bible and salvation that He so lovingly offers.

We will start our class again in February – this time at an SBC church in North Salt Lake.

[Our website is "under construction". If you cannot connect, don't worry – it will be up very soon with added new information.]

**May the Lord Jesus bless you as you celebrate His Birthday and His love for us all.**

In His love,  
Rauni & Dennis Higley

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**Thought for the month: Legalism vs. Grace** – **Legalism** is interested in what people do and how they look. **Grace** is interested in people's hearts – who they are internally. Men look on outward appearances. God looks into our hearts.

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