



December 1, 2020

[H.I.S.] He Is Savior, Acts 4:12

HIS Ministries December 2020 Newsletter, covering November 2020

It is hard to believe that it is December already. Our fall has been so warm and without much snow and that makes it feel like seasons run together! However, winter will be here shortly, and time to wish you all a **Blessed Christmas!**

When we wish *Merry Christmas* or hear it wished to us, we need stop and think again: *What does Christmas really mean to us?* Is it decorations we bring out to brighten our homes? Is it gifts we give and receive? Is it special foods we prepare for our friends and family? That might be all that most see that Christmas is all about. The world in general even wants to eliminate the word “*Christmas*” and call this time of the year just a *Holiday* instead. But how do we as believers in Jesus Christ approach this season? **We need to stop and really ponder what does Christmas mean to us, and share that meaning with others we meet, and tell them that we celebrate Christmas because Jesus Christ is the One who made our eternal salvation and our future life in God’s Heaven possible.**

It all begun with a promised Birth that was going to take place in a little town of Bethlehem, a promise written by Micah over 700 years before it happened. **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall He come forth to Me, the one to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting.”** (Micah 5:2.)

This event the Bible has been teaching for thousands of years is **Christmas when we celebrate the Birth of Christ.** The scholars who have studied this carefully from well-known historical sources, point that our Lord’s birth did not take place in December 25th, but on the 29th of September, 2 BC. But regardless of whether we know the exact birth date of Jesus/Yeshua, what is important to know is that **He was born for us, and that we understand the profound importance of His birth.**

We learn more about our Lord Jesus/Yeshua from Isaiah’s writing than even from the New Testament. Isaiah was related to the Royal Family of Judah and Jesus/Yeshua is from that tribe. The Book of Isaiah is considered to be a *Messianic Book*. Isaiah received his prophetic calling (Isa. 6:1) in the year when *king Uzziah* died (740 BC). (For more about King Uzziah, see 2 Chron. 26.)

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, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. Upon the throne of David, and over His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this.” (Isaiah 9:6-7.)

Indeed, He is the *Mighty God*. He is all that this verse says. In His first coming He came to offer salvation as God’s gift to all who come to Him. (John 3:16.) When He comes again, He comes as a judge of the world that had 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 His mother, Mary. (See: Luke 1:31-33.)

The world pictures Yeshua/Jesus as a physically beautiful man who will give all who follow Him the gift of eternal life. *Indeed He gives eternal life to all who come to Him for salvation*, but we do not get from Isaiah the same picture or image as the world has of His person. Isaiah describes Him in these words: *“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground: He has no form or comeliness; and when see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.”*(Isaiah 53:1-4.) Isaiah continues: *“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living: for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked, but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When you 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. He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”* (Isaiah 53:5-12.)

Let’s look at this Messianic prophesy in Isaiah 53 a little closer: In verse 1, the question, *“Who hath believed our report?”* is presented as to draw attention to the lack of faith people have in God’s message. Messiah was rejected, His person was refused, and to human observation, the Davidic line seemed to have ended, thus it was like *“dry ground”*. His mission was misunderstood, He was humiliated, and they did not see *beauty nor comeliness* or anything *kingly* in His person for men to admire or *desire Him* (v. 2). Men want to hide their faces from His suffering and death which alone brings appeasement between God and man (vss. 4-6). He suffered death (vss. 7- 9), and He will be exalted. [The *“report”* in verse 1 is actually the gospel message that His apostles preached after *His death, burial and resurrection* – 1 Cor. 15:1-4, a message of *good news* that is still largely rejected.] Some have argued that verse 5 means that He paid for our sicknesses and that our illnesses are healed through His suffering (v. 5). It does not say that! God can heal anyone He wants to heal, but there have been and are many faithful followers of the Lord who are not healed from their illnesses. What God has promised is to forgive our sins if we come to Him through Jesus, who paid for them all! This verse says that He took God’s wrath for all sin in our place . We receive spiritual healing and peace through His *“stripes”*. *“He was wounded for our transgressions* (our sins), *He was bruised for our iniquities* (for our wrong doings); *the chastisement of our peace* (peace that we lack as sinners) *was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed* (forgiveness gives us spiritual healing, which brings peace with God).”

When we carefully read all of chapter 53 of Isaiah, we can be assured that Jesus/Yeshua was *the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world*. (John 1:29.) 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 all *“had gone astray”*, *“the LORD had laid on Him the iniquity of us all”*(vss. 6-7).

He was taken to an illegitimate trial (during the Passover), held in the middle of the night and after that He was *“cut off”*, He suffered a violent death seemingly by the 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” for He was crucified and He died between two thieves, *“and with the rich in His death”*, is a reference to His burial in a tomb of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea (v. 9).

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 for *our iniquities*, so that we, who believe in Him, can *become children of God, His seed*, through our faith in His finished work for us. (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26-29.) By our *knowledge* that involves our faith and acceptance of Messiah, we submit ourselves to the *righteousness of Christ*, who will *“justify many for He shall bear their iniquities”* (v. 11). His righteousness will then be applied to us even though *we have no righteousness of our own.* (Romans 10:1-4.) This great chapter of Isaiah 53 ends (v. 12) with the glorification and exaltation of the Lord. (See also Philipians 2:9.) He *“poured out His soul”*, carries a meaning that He gave Himself, He died on 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 Timothy 2:5.) Because of His atoning work for us, *if we are in Him*, we have guaranteed acceptance before God. Our salvation is secure. Praise be to our Lord Jesus. - Let us worship Him with true understanding of God’s great love for us, and share the gospel of salvation (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 2:8-9) with all whom we meet. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16.)

This month has been hard in many ways for the entire country. From March 2020 onward Covid19 Pandemic has brought a lot of concern and worry to all, and the November Election brought out much misinformation about candidates in both major parties and further confused and troubled America. Election and obvious *fraud* connected to it has divided even families. Though it has been nearly a month since actual voting took place, it is still not totally clear who our president will be come January 20th. It was Joseph Stalin who said, *“who wins does not come from the votes, but it comes from those who count the votes.”*

In America we have *red states* (Republicans) and *blue states* (Democrats). President Trump won just about all *red states* across the USA (est. 2/3 of 50 states). Most of the *blue states* (est. 1/3 of 50 states) have larger cities and more population (Eastern states of USA), and just a few Western states and California (with the largest population) are counted as *“blue states”* – and these are the ones where *fraud* is now said to have taken place with *mail-in ballots and computers that are said to have switched the votes from President Trump to Joe Biden.* These blue states have been ordered to re-calculate their votes – but problems may still be with *those who count the votes*... Lots of attorneys are at work and country is on *“pins and needles”*, for so much depends on who will win! Democratic Party is talking about country becoming Socialist, if they win. Republican Party is saying *“absolutely NOT socialist – never”*! In addition the world is waiting for *“The Great Reset!”* that is or was supposed to take place in January 2021... (If you “google” that term, you can see what that would mean to everyone, in everywhere.)

Many people *“not so familiar with political parties”* have asked **what is the difference between Republican Party and Democratic Party?** The short answer is GOD!

We are not just voting for a person (or personality) as our president, but **what the two main Parties and their leaders represent by their platform-plans for the country’s future?** Republican Party consists of largely *Christians who at least try to follow what God approves and is for*, but the Democratic Party is mostly secular and not so much for God. **Since the sitting President, Donald Trump, is a Christian** (though

fairly new one) **this election from Republicans' view point is more about GOD than politics. God expects and even requires that professing Christians are for Pro-Life, anti-abortion, and stand firmly for that!** (Rom. 1.) God's Word gives clear warnings for His people, and instructions, as in 2 Chron. 7:14; Daniel 9:10, and further promises in Jer. 18:7-8 and in Joel 2:12-13, where He said, ***"Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning...Return to the Lord your God for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness: and (perhaps) He relents from doing harm. Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him."***

There has been a lot of prayer sent to the Lord for the unborn, and prayer for betterment of the country's future. It might be that still not enough people have paid attention or educated themselves on the differences of their parties' platforms... **Socialism is just a step away from outright Communism where only the leaders have freedoms and rights, and can own property, including having rights to bear arms and have security, rights to their opinions etc.** When that kind of change takes place in this country, it will not take long before these lessons are learned, but it could well be way too late as it was in Venezuela, Cuba and elsewhere. There are many examples in recent history of what will take place when socialism is the rule. Those who are over 60 or even over 40 may remember...? Next 6 weeks will determine America's next 4 years and even after... Prayer is needed of all who love God, family and our country.

This is our last newsletter for the year 2020. It surely has been a year to remember for its many trials. Covid19, "China-virus", has *united* the entire world with its scare and suffering. The world will perhaps never be the same again. However all of us who believe that our God still reigns know that **He will take care of His own.** Phil. 1:6: ***"Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."*** (=Rapture!) *The Lord has not promised us smooth sailing, but He has promised a safe landing. He has a purpose in allowing every circumstance into our lives. We can bank on this: He'll see you to the shore in every storm of life. God is willing to assume the full responsibility for the life totally yielded to Him. One of these days our destiny will be fulfilled. And soon and very soon, He is going to step down from the mountain of His glory, and the trumpet will sound. Our little ship will leave the sea of time, and immediately we'll be on the shores of eternity. When He comes, He's coming for you! And He's coming for me!* 1Thess. 4:16-18 tells us of Christ's return, ***"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."*** (Adrian Rogers)

We are very thankful for you who have faithfully partnered with us in this ministry, and by your prayers and gifts made it possible for us to be able to give Bibles and many other needed books, CDs and Videos, **free of any charge**, nationwide, and we even sent them overseas to help many new believers to grow in the Lord's teachings faster than without these helps would be possible. We are absolutely sure that **your reward from the Lord will be great** for you have given as the Lord directs, for we only present our needs to the Lord in prayer (Phil. 4:6, 19), thanking Him for His care of their needs and ours, and you have responded to Him by helping our ministry-needs! **Isn't God Great!** - Dennis has been blessed with a lot of work, even in the midst of this pandemic. He has been careful staying away from contact with other people while working and he has remained healthy, and I have been doing surprisingly well also – having a lot less pain. ☺ **God has been so good to us. We thank Him from the bottom of our hearts!**

We are asking prayer for Judy, Liz, Al, Sandy, Scott and Cynthia, Richard, Dwayne, Heber, Yandel, Aira, Bruce, Marlene, Lisa and Suzi for their health problems and some other troubling issues that have come to their lives. The Lord knows exactly what each of them need and He takes care of them. We thank them for their friendship and trust.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 112:6) and for our country and our Lord's direction during these hard days.

**We wish you Merry Christmas and Peace that comes from our Lord, Jesus Christ.
In His love,**

Rauni & Dennis Higley

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[We will be sending tax receipts around the middle of January 2021.]

P.S. We are adding the following for further explanation relating to Mormon understanding of Christmas and who Jesus Christ is to them. Although they take the stories of Jesus' life from the New Testament, their understanding of who He is comes from Joseph Smith and their latter-day prophets. I.e. "*their Jesus*" is not the same ***Almighty God*** the Bible teaches about (Rev. 1:8), but a created being, a spirit brother of mankind and angels. I will quote from an LDS pamphlet, "*What Mormons Think of Christ*" that says: "*Christ is the Firstborn...all men lived in a pre-mortal estate before they were born into this world; all were born in the pre-mortal existence as the spirit children of the Father. Christ was the firstborn spirit child...John was fully aware of the pre-mortal status and greatness of Christ when he wrote of him: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.'* (John 1:1-2.) ... ***He is the firstborn spirit child of God the Father...He is the Son of God, literally, actually, as men are the sons of their mortal parents... The members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accept Jesus Christ as he has been revealed to them*** [by Joseph Smith]". (Quoted from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints', pamphlet PTM12198, 10/82. Emphasis added.)

In the light of this, we can see why, a few years ago, the LDS prophet and president, Gordon B. Hinckley in his Christmas message, titled "*Season for Gratitude*", wrote first about Joseph Smith. He began: "***This is a season for giving and time for gratitude. We remember with appreciation the birth of the Prophet Joseph Smith, which is celebrated this same month of December, two days before Christmas. How great indeed is our debt to him. His life began in Vermont and ended in Illinois, and marvelous were the things that happened between that simple beginning and tragic ending. It was he who brought us a true knowledge of God, the Eternal Father, and His risen Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. During the short time of his great vision he learned more concerning the nature of Deity than all those who through centuries had argued the matter in learned councils and scholarly forums. He brought us the marvelous Book of Mormon as another witness for the living reality of the Son of God. To him, from those who held it anciently, came the priesthood, the power, the gift, the authority, the keys to speak and act in the name of God. He gave us the organization of the Church and its great and sacred mission. Through him were restored the keys of the holy temples, that men and women might enter into eternal covenants with God and that the great work for the dead might be accomplished to open the way for the eternal blessings. 'Great is his glory and endless his priesthood. Ever and ever the keys he will hold. Faithful and true, he will enter his kingdom, crowned in the midst of the prophets of old.'* (Praise to the Man, LDS Hymn # 27.) He was the instrument in the hands of the Almighty. He was the servant acting under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ in bringing to pass his great latter-day work. We stand in reverence before him. He is the great prophet of this dispensation. He stands at the head of this great and mighty work which is spreading across the earth. He is our prophet, our revelator, our seer, our friend. Let us not forget him. Let not his memory be forgotten in the celebration of Christmas. God be thanked for the Prophet Joseph. Now, what a wonderful season this is... All the Christian world, while not understanding what we understand, pauses for a moment and remembers with gratitude the birth of the Son of God... Even in the Christmas season, let us not forget the December birth of Joseph Smith Jr., the great prophet of this dispensation. God be thanked for him." (Ensign, p.2, Dec. 21, 1997.)**