



African Post 28

12-25-24



A Very, Merry Christmas

Good morning. Our Africa Post team wishes you a very “Merry Christmas” on many levels today!

People and cultures mark significant anniversaries with ceremonies and celebrations. Some remembrances are negative like death dates or national calamities such as 9/11. Others are more positive remembrances like individual birthdays, wedding days, and national independence dates.

In the Western world – which has been Christianized for centuries – Christmas is the most observed holiday. In America even most non-Christians and even Jews observe Christmas on a single day – December 25. In some parts of Europe Christmas is observed over a period of days beginning in late December and running into early January.

But all point to the most important event since creation – what I like to call “the Jesus Event”¹

So significant is the birth of Jesus that the Western calendar divides history into two ages: B.C. being “before Christ” and A.D. being “anno domini” which is Latin for “in the year of our Lord”.

His coming was no random event. More than 300 Old Testament prophecies predict his coming in detail. A few:

- He will be born of a virgin (a supernatural birth) – **Isaiah 7:14**
- He will be born in Bethlehem – **Micah 5:2**
- He will be a divine-man who will rule over God’s People – **Isaiah 9:6-7**
- He will be a divine-man who will rule over the world – **Daniel 7:13-14**
- He will be the Messiah for the Jews – **Isaiah 61:1-4**
- He will be the Savior of the world (all of us Gentiles) – **Matthew 4:12-16**
- He will die for the sins of his People – **Isaiah 53:1-12**
- He will die by crucifixion and be resurrected -- **Psalms 22:1-31**

And many, many more.

And so it came to pass, to fulfill every prophecy regarding the Coming One, Jesus was conceived by a virgin, born in Bethlehem, preached and ministered as the Anointed One of God (the Messiah), died, was buried, and was resurrected, and ascended to the Father where he rules over all creation at the right hand of God.

And as I’ve already said, this was no random event.

In fact, God planned for this before he first spoke light into darkness. (See **Genesis 1-3**)

The coming of Jesus to die for the sins of the world and to return his People to original design was planned before creation. **Revelation 13:8** speaks of Jesus as “the Lamb of God who was slain from the foundation of the world.”

In other words, when God created our world – when he created us in his image – when he gave us the freedom to choose obedience or rebellion – when he designed us to live forever -- he knew in advance that we would abuse that freedom – we would selfishly sin.

So what would God do when we chose rebellion over obedience?

Would he take away our freedom to prevent future sinning? **No, he doesn't do that.** Would he destroy this creation as a failed effort? **No, he doesn't do that.** Would he abandon us to turn his attention to another project? **No, he doesn't do that.**

It turns out that God had already decided what he would do before he laid the foundation of our world. Paul writes in **1 Cor. 2:7-** “... *the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God—his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began.*” After and because we chose to sin, God would intervene in human history to take all of the sin on himself and open the way for his People to return to original design.

That was God's original plan. And this is exactly what he did in Jesus of Nazareth. In the fullness of time, God poured out the Son of God into a human baby who would grow up to be the Messiah to the Jews and the Savior of the world.

At Jesus' dedication in the Temple, an elderly, righteous man named Simeon came and prophesied over baby Jesus:
Luke 2:29- “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace.”³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”

God did this to demonstrate his love for all of us – for you – in that while we were sinners Christ Jesus died for each one of us. (See **Romans 5:8**)

Jesus came to deliver us from sin, suffering, Satan, and death. When we accept his gift of salvation at New Birth we join the ongoing story of God's creation of his unique People. When we lead another person to Christ we bring them into God's plan for the ages along with us.

- Have you embraced the fullness of God's extraordinary love for you?
- Have you realized the importance of the birth of Jesus for you?
- Have you been gloriously delivered from the Old Covenant (the Law), and brought into the New Covenant (Grace and Mercy)?
- Have you prioritized telling people in your corner of the world about God's great love for them which is displayed for them in his Son Jesus? Have you told them about the new, eternal life Jesus came to offer them?

Read the full Christmas story in Matthew 1 & 2, and in Luke 1:5 through 2:40.

Merry Christmas from the Africa Post team!

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FOOTNOTE 1- “The Jesus Event” begins with Jesus' miraculous conception – then his birth – his early life – his baptism and ministry – his suffering, crucifixion, death and burial – his resurrection – his ascension to the Father – and his outpouring of his Spirit at Pentecost.