

A CHRISTmas Long Ago

O come, O come Emmanuel....Rejoice, Rejoice Emmanuel...
Shall come to thee...O Israel.

The strains of a familiar hymn fill my mind as I listen to the sounds of Christmas.

Interesting isn't it that a Christian hymn writer in the 1800's would encapsulate in the lyrics of a hymn, the Jewish cry through the centuries that God would come and be with His people (Emmanuel means "God with us") as in days of old.

And so the Nation of Israel not recognizing the first advent of their Messiah waits yet another year for their Messiah to come, so that they too will be able to sing the end of the hymn....Rejoice, Rejoice Emmanuel..."God is with US"), Shall come to thee, O Israel.

My house is full of family and friends. I have walked to the front door of my home, away from the noise of the family gathered in the kitchen. As I look out the side window next to the front door, I began to reflect on the light shining from my porch light.

The outer darkness that surrounds my home is pierced by the porch light that emanates a soft welcoming light to those who are approaching. The darkness as always bows the knee and recedes before the light. For the power of light is far greater than that of darkness. The light proclaims here is the way to my home, Come, O Come out of the darkness into my light where you will find love, companionship, comfort and rest.

The light beckons to all who were invited to find my home and enjoy my company; just as the light of Christ beckons your soul to spend eternity with HIM. Matthew refers to those who will reside outside the New Jerusalem (the city of God) away from God, as living away from His Light for eternity in outer darkness forever.

The wind has been gently kicking up. The predicted snow fall is beginning. The tiny wind funnels of snow flakes begin dancing before my eyes. Swirling patterns of dazzling white snow with sparkling diamonds dance for joy in the light coming to rest on the ground forming a white blanket covering the earth.

The earth once covered in darkness beyond the light from my porch is now turning white. The white blanket of snow begins to reflect light causing the shadows to recede even further.

The light emanating from my porch represents to me the light of Christ, the Messiah who came long ago. The One God refers to in the Bible as "The Light of

the World” who will cause darkness to recede, while leading all people who have been invited, to His door.

(No one has been left out of His invitation to come in to Him...not even you.)

The light illumines the white of the snow that whirls around the door. The snow represents His purity and righteousness; His righteousness that we all must acquire before we can enter through His door that opens into Heaven. God has made it clear, that only those that are Holy and perfect according to His standards can enter Heaven. He also has made it clear that not one of us is good enough to get in on our own merit.

Isaiah 64:6 in the Old Testament says, “all our righteous deeds are like filthy garments. This is echoed by the Apostle Paul in Romans 3:9 when he said, “Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin...there is no one righteous, not even one.”

I am looking forward to the Second Coming of Yeshua / Jesus and The New Jerusalem. What about you? Are you remembering to celebrate the reason for the HOLYDAY? In eternity past before the foundations of the world God set into time the Birth Date of Emmanuel (God with us), His Son Jesus, the Messiah / the Christ of all humanity.

Let us fast forward to another day that God has set, when time is no more. This day will begin with the dawn of Eternity in the hearts of all those who humbly will bow the knee before the King of Kings.

Revelation 21

The New Jerusalem

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, "**I am making everything new!**" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son."

Jesus is the "Light of the World", the One who's coming we celebrate this night.

Christmas is not about the baby. Christmas is about the One whose journey of sorrows began from eternity past. Christmas is about a small cry that finally came from the lips of God in a manger to pierce the darkness of this world. Thirty-three years later that small cry would become a deafening Roar (Echoing throughout the Universe) from the lips of the God / Man on the Cross-as He proclaimed "It Is Finished" as sin was conquered for all time and eternity.

Four centuries of silence passed between the Old Testament and the New Testament. God had not spoken to His people for 400 years until the deafening silence was broken by the cry of baby.

The first thing a baby does when it leaves the comfort of its womb and enters the world is to cry. But the second thing a baby does after it cries is to weep tears.

The silence of the ages was broken as God cried. The tears of God washed over His small face. The hidden face of God became real to us as God entered the world a newborn babe to live among us (Emmanuel); but with a broken heart.

The baby's cry says to me, it is enough. No longer must you "Wonder as you Wander" in the night seeking refuge from your pain and wounds. "Come, O Come", bring your pain and sorrows and your wounds to me.

Those of you who know sorrow are closest to my heart. "Come, O Come", worship me with your wounds for I have been wounded for you. I am the God who came to be broken for you, the God with a broken heart who comes to make all things new again.

God has said He collects all the tears you shed during your life in a bottle, but what of HIS tears, the tears of God?

Eden had known no tears....no rain from the sky. Eden had only known the light reflected from the face of God. With the first disobedient bite in the Garden of Eden, came the fall of mankind and brought the very first tear of sorrow to the eyes of God. And for the first time darkness entered the world.

With the passing of time Sin grew worse and covered the earth until the days of Noah. God had collected all the tears of a fallen world that He could stand to hold.

And then, the collected tears of a fallen world began to rain down from the face of God and fill the earth.

The fallen people never felt rain before. Then they looked up at the dark clouds above them and the clouds burst open as the rain fell from the sky, and so it was that the tears from the broken heart of God washed over the earth.

“In the Beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1

How magnificent it was at the beginning of the creation of the Universe as God called forth from nothing....Light. The myriad of billions upon billions of the angelic hosts sang with One Voice as the symphony of creation continued to come forth from the spoken Word of God.

The Bible says God rejoices over you with singing. Here, on earth we speak words to communicate. Maybe in heaven we will sing to communicate.

But for now the angels are silent.

They wait with anticipation for the final movement of Gods Symphony of Salvation. When together with us, our combined voices will sing praises to our Glorious and HOLY GOD.

Only one other time during recorded Biblical history did the angels sing. That was at the Birth of our King 2,000 years ago. The King who came for those who have nothing; to those who say... " I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing, He says you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked”, Revelation 3:16-18 ...Revelation 3 in context.

The Song “Mary did you know?” by Mark Lowry speaks eloquently of the miracle of the ages...the coming of the prophesied God/Man... Emanuel, God with Us.

Mary did you know?

Lyrics by Mark Lowry

Mary did you knowthat your baby boy

- would someday walk on water?
- would save our sons and daughters?
- would soon deliver you?
- would calm a storm with His hand?
- walked where angels trod?

And when you kiss your little baby.....**you’ve kissed the face of God.**

Oh, **Mary did you know**.....

- the blind will see...
- the deaf will hear...
- the dead will live again...
- the lame will leap
- the dumb will speak praises to the Lamb.

Oh, **Mary did you know** your baby boy...is Lord of all creation?

And **Mary did you know** your baby boy...will one day rule the nations

Oh **Mary did you know** the sleeping child you're holding **...is the Great I AM!**

Isaiah 7:14 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel which translated means "God with us".

Matt 1:20 "Behold an angel of the Lord appeared to Him in a dream saying...Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit and she will bear a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for it is He who will save His people from their sins"

Luke 2:18 "And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart."

Isaiah 9:6 "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."

Seek God this Christmas with the eyes of a child.

Their faces I formed so that mine they would seek
Ears to listen for the Word I would speak
Eyes to see, minds to understand
All they required I made with my Hand
The Law and the Prophets for centuries foretold
The birth of a baby begotten of old
In words un-encoded, with language so plain
That even the simplest could call on my name
Fathom mysteries confounding the wise
See the Messiah through a child's eyes.

My CHRISTmas Prayer for you:

Father:

Most everyone we know and love forgets that this **HOLYday** called **CHRISTmas** is about Jesus the Messiah, the Christ, Your Son, Your gift to each of us.

We forget that 3,500 years ago You wrote down through the hands of Your Prophets the Messianic Old Testament Prophecies about a coming Redeemer, the coming Messiah who would take away each individual's sins if they but believe in HIM and His death on the Cross.

You sent your Holy Angels to proclaim His birth to Shepherds; the poor to whom the hope of the ages would mean the most. How awesome to think that Heaven touched Earth that night so long ago.

We thank you for last year, for you honored each of us with food, clothing, shelter, relationships with loved ones and a job to work and pay our bills.

Help us to learn from life and its lessons. Help us to love one another. Help us to look forward to each brand new day, because with you, all things are possible and your mercies are new each morning.

Regardless of what might be ahead, we trust You in all our circumstances. We may not be sure of the future, but we know who holds the future in HIS hands.

We look forward to your personal care for each one of us and those we care about so deeply, through the coming year.

We Praise, Honor and Thank You...

Father... for sending us Your beloved Son as our Redeemer.

Holy Spirit...for staying with us during our journey home.

Jesus... who for the Joy set before Him, went to the Cross for each one of us.

Jesus, who is able to keep us from stumbling, and who will bring each of us that know and love HIM into His glorious presence with great joy.

We recognize and honor Jesus as YOUR great gift to us at Christmas.

Yet, we also look up to the Heavens, as YOU promised, for the soon coming of our Messiah, our Redeemer, The King of Kings and The Lord of Lords...

Yeshua... "The Lion of the Tribe of Judah."

May the light that came into the world, shine forth from your heart and touch the lives of all those you hold dear this Christ-mas Season.

Christmas is not about the baby, but about the One who gave you the greatest gift of all. He came to exchange His death for Yours and give you Eternal life and a place called Heaven to live in forever.

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