

told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them (Luke 2:1-20).

**By dying, Jesus gained the victory just as He planned from the beginning:** Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14-15).

**Because Jesus died as a substitute in our place, God can offer salvation while upholding His perfect righteousness because every sin was punished on Jesus.** Everyone who believes on Him receives remission of sins (Acts 10:43).

**The world wants nothing to do with God's salvation gift.** Why are the nations in an uproar, And the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand, And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed: "Let us tear their fetters apart, And cast away their cords from us!" He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury: "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain." "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee. 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware.'" Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the LORD with reverence, And rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (Psalm 2).

**God's offer of salvation is only to those who hunger and thirst for it. Only those who are willing to surrender control of their lives to Him will receive it.** Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and the gospel will save it (Mark 8:35). Jesus said, "Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

# Merry Christmas!



*From the Bears*

# The Real Christmas Story!

*You shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.*

(The main **Christmas story highlights are in bold font** and verses are provided in smaller, italic print for anyone who wants to read the actual Bible accounts.)

**The Christmas story did not begin when Jesus was born. It was all planned out before the world was created by God.** *All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).*

**After He created the world, God announced the Christmas story in the very beginning when He told Satan His plan to destroy him:** *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel (Genesis 3:15). The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work (1 John 3:8)*

**The promised conqueror (Messiah) would come from Abraham's seed. About 2000 B.C., the prophet Abraham told his son Isaac that this victory would take place on Mt. Moriah (where Jesus was crucified 2000 years later):** *Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided." Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (Genesis 22:14-18)*

**This Messiah would be a descendent of King David (who was a descendent of Abraham who lived around 1000 B.C.):** *When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (II Samuel 7:12-13).*

**This Messiah would be born as a baby but be called "the Mighty God":** *For to us a child will be born, to us a son will be given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace..... **He will reign on David's throne** and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this (Isaiah 9:6-7).*

**The prophet Isaiah also said (about 700 B.C) that the Messiah would suffer as a substitute sacrifice for our sins:** *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth (Isaiah 53:7).*

**The birth of Jesus the Messiah (about 2000 years ago):** *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us (Matthew 1:18-23).*

*And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

*Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was*