

The Perfect Time For Christmas
(continued from front page)

come again. Prior to the Crucifixion, Jesus gave signs that would precede His second coming. In describing the evil, He said that "because sinfulness would greatly increase, the love of God in many people would go cold" (Matt. 24:12). Abounding Sin—Abating Love.

What does sin look like? How does a person know whether or not they are truly on God's side, and therefore safe? Sin comes in all varieties; tailor-made to suit your taste, though not the taste of someone else. At the end of the day (all the external differences aside) sin is sin. That is why it has been said that "the ground is level at the foot of the Cross."

The grand purpose of Jesus' coming was announced to Mary's husband Joseph, saying "And you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins!" (Matthew 1:21). Again, this quote (as in the first paragraph of this article) is taken from Isaiah, but from 7:14. From the books of Moses, through the Prophets and the Psalms, Jesus birth, life ministry, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension were all foretold. Interestingly, in the Isaiah verses of chapters 7 and 9, concerning this "child born" and "son given," He is foretold by the names Immanuel (meaning "God with us"), "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Those are some powerful names for a baby boy! The scene was set, and the time became perfect for Him to come...notwithstanding all the darkness of sin and spiritual and moral ignorance and decay.

In such a time of darkness, did anyone take notice of Jesus' birth? Yes. Common shepherds came quickly in full obedience to the heavenly information given to them. Common

"WHERE ARE THE WISE?" (1 Cor. 1:20). This was only one of various questions St. Paul asks the wise guys of the world, who with all their worldly wisdom "cannot find God. They should all learn from the 'Wise Men' who came diligently to find and worship the Christ...and they went home 'another way,' yes, geographically, but also spiritually!



Matt. 2:12

people can come to Jesus today, as well, if they will only listen and obey. The "wise men" from the East came, who we could say were from a pagan civilization, but whom God also gave heavenly information...which they followed to the letter! As I wrote last month, God Speaks, and we can get help from Him if we will just listen and obey. Added to the record were two old people, Simeon and Anna, that God spoke to regarding the birth of Jesus Christ the Messiah. Like the shepherds and the "wise men," they didn't miss out on this glorious special blessing. What about YOU? Dear friends, nothing... absolutely nothing... is worth missing the blessing of God to you personally. It is the perfect time for Christmas, that is, for Jesus to come to YOU, even though our world today is sitting and wallowing in darkness, for St. Paul tells us boldly, "But where sin did abound grace did

What Christmas is NOT

It is **not** arguing over the date of Jesus' birth, as in 25 December. Though the exact date of Jesus' birth is uncertain, "Christmas" is set aside as the internationally-recognised celebration of a reality, **not** a fairy tale!

Christmas is **not** merely decorating the inside or outside of your house or business, or trying to *out-decorate* others for personal pride or status (anyone can do that who has no personal commitment to the real meaning of Christmas, and without using any spiritual decor!). It is **not** in parties **nor** gift mania, etc. etc.

So, does this mean that my Christmas is *boring*? Yes! It is *boring* a hole in the darkness, like the street-lamp lighters of London's former times of notorious fog, to give light to those who "walk and sit in darkness."

(See front page, first paragraph)



The London Christian Standard ...and Printed

"Lift up a standard for the people." Isaiah 62:10

Gabriel L. Mancino - Editor. Printing in London since 1983
421 Watford Way, Hendon London NW4 4TR Phone: 020-8202-0806
Website: www.londonchristianstandard.com

The Perfect Time For Christmas!

"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son." (Galatians 4:4)

Gabriel L. Mancino



The world was in a mess when Jesus Christ was born. It sounds like things haven't changed much! By the time Jesus started His earthly ministry, Matthew describes the nation by quoting the words of the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, saying, "The people that sat in darkness have seen a great light" (Isa. 9:1,2 and 42:7). In one place it says they walked in darkness, but here that they sat in it, but that's the way sin progresses.

Psalm 1 contrasts the way of the wicked with the way of the godly. The very first verse says that the godly does not walk or stand or sit in the manner of the ungodly. Sin can become so accommodating that a person loves walking that way, then stands still with attention arrested, and finally just gets cosy and sits in it. I remember years ago at the Military Tattoo in Edinburgh we sat watching the

splendid presentations in the dark...and in the pouring rain! Toward the end, the Master of Ceremonies had us all to stand. I can't recall the purpose, but I imagined we were soon to be dismissed to leave. Instead, the speaker asked us all to sit down again. I thought, NO! We must sit down in this cold rain again with my clothes soaked through...from top to (literal) bottom! I could hardly force myself to comply.

Yet, this is what the world of Jesus' time was like, and the world in which we find ourselves at present—walking, standing and sitting, not in rain, but in the deep darkness of sin. Jesus came to a world like that. According to the Bible verse under the title above, it was the perfect time for Jesus to come. Admittedly, there were other things beside the aspects of sin that paved the way for Christ's entrance into the world. The point I wish quickly to address is that we find ourselves in a gloriously similar position. No, sin with all its dreadful darkness is neither glorious nor enjoyable. But the Christ who was promised for 4,000 years finally came, and "this same Jesus" said He would

(continued on back page)

ENTER THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS! "And the angel answered and said to Mary 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God' " (Luke 1:35). Christ's birth by the Spirit makes our NEW birth possible. Then, we are to help others be born again, too!



Special Babies

Gabriel L Mancino



traditional home and marriage relationship, but these words in Isaiah convey a tremendous and exciting reality. The chapter continues with the instruction to make house extensions to accommodate the babes. The type of child-birth described here would be a blessing beyond measure to Britain and the rest of the world. If you didn't catch it, the birth of Jesus makes these others births possible. Perverting "Christmas" perverts all other births in the nation.

Another matter God raises here with solemn words, yet with promise of hope and blessing for obedience, relates to 1) the *proper* keeping of the Sabbath, and 2) relating to fasting (believe it or not)! Both are found shortly after the chapters already mentioned, in Isaiah 56 and 58; and both have a glorious knock-on effect to all others, resulting in new babes! What's more, God even promises to give these obedient "outsiders" a better name than sons or daughters! (56:5). God has His loving hands around the world; no one excluded.

Sadly, "Christmas" and the Sabbath have both been perverted and polluted with *ritualism* on one side and *worldly commercialism* on the other. No wonder Britain is in dark depression on all sides: the "babies" are being aborted. At the end of October a report was given that abortion can triple the risk of depression. After Jesus' birth, King Herod ordered the massacre of the male children in and around Bethlehem. This resulted in the lamentable outcry prophesied long-before by Jeremiah (31:15— with Matt.2:17,18).

Before the Christ of the Cradle became the Christ of the Cross, He was the Christ of the Crowd, turning over the tables of religious crooks, and declaring from this Isaiah chapter (56:7) that God's house is a holy house of prayer for ALL people. Jesus' birth was God's means to bring "babes" to Himself from every nation on earth. **Those are Special Babies!**

Christmas celebrates the birth of the greatest baby ever born on earth. Obviously, many parents feel *their baby* is "the fairest of them all." Not long ago, a newspaper article told of parents obsessed with the idea of getting their little girl into a beauty contest, and soon into fashion and modelling. One parent asked the contest staff over the phone if it was okay that her child had only just started walking! This is merely one of the typical perversions of the beauty and purpose of child-bearing.

Our front page article refers to the prophecies of Isaiah regarding the coming Messiah, Christ, as a baby. Like babies mentioned above, Jesus was a beautiful baby and child, and also had a purpose...a great purpose. As Isaiah later tells us in that remarkable section of the Suffering Servant Saviour (Ch.52:13 to 53:12), **that baby grew up to win no external beauty contest.** The suffering which culminated with the Cross and His death made Jesus' outward appearance so terribly disfigured that no one even wanted to *look* at Him! Of course, we know He came purposely to do this for us all.

Rather shockingly, the first words of the next chapter (Isaiah 54) start out with the command for childless and husbandless women to sing! Though these women had not cried out in child-bearing pains, they can start birth-crying now. Furthermore, God says through Isaiah that these people will have more children than the married ones! We certainly believe in the Biblical and



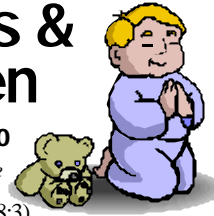
In 1885 Christina Rossetti wrote
*"Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas, Star and angels gave the sign."
(There are two more beautiful stanzas)*



Of Babes & Children

Gabriel L Mancino

"Unless you have a change of heart and become as little children..." (Matt.18:3)



What kind of "babe" or child are you? In this Christmas issue, we have looked at Jesus, the baby, as well as other surprisingly-related subjects of tremendous importance. We have seen that God's plan, centralising in Jesus, was to bring forth new babes from every people-group on earth.

The Bible clearly tells us the tragic reality—and *Jesus added His own confirming testimony*—that we will either be children of God or children of the devil. Jesus even said this to "strict religious people." Remember, "religious" people don't necessarily go to church. Even among those addicted in one way or another (but who never attend a religious service!) some will strongly profess belief in God. **God's true children** will listen to Him, love Him and obey Him.

In Matthew 11:16-30 and Luke 10, Jesus speaks of peoples' responses to Him being like **children in the market place** who could not be satisfied, no matter if *this* or *that* was tried in order to please them. His point was that both John the Baptist and He Himself were mocked and rejected, though they came with differing approaches to the people.

After saying this, Jesus then sends His disciples to various towns as His representatives with the final sobering truth, "*those who hear you hear Me, and those that reject you reject Me, and those that reject Me reject the One that sent Me!*" **I am convinced that many people do not realise the full impact of those words of Jesus.** To reject Jesus, that is, to reject loving and obeying Him and receiving

Him as the Saviour from sin and God's provided bridge to Himself...is to reject God who sent Jesus. That means that no one can purposely bypass the Jesus of the Bible (for the other Jesuses are inventions of men) without damning eternal consequences. St. Paul wrote that already in the first century some were going around preaching "*another Jesus.*"

After making this stunning declaration, the Bible says, "*In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. In Luke 10 we immediately have **Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan**, but it was given because of a man who *seemed* to desire to walk with God. The Bible says that the man, in fact, was simply trying to justify himself, rather than truly obey God. Like many today, he was one of *'the wise and prudent.'*"*

In the prayer of Jesus (above), **Jesus is not saying that He is glad that many people have the truth hidden from them.** As in the book of Revelation, at the end of the Bible, Jesus rejoices in the holy justice of God that (to use James' & Peter's words) "*resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*" **Jesus said that we must repent and become as little children...NOT like the children in the market place, but humble and teachable children.** He was comparing the general public of His day to the market children, and "Christmas" comes in vain to the "children" that cannot be satisfied, regardless of what God does to help them. But, to the "children" who hunger for God and are humble and teachable, God's Gift-giving only began at Christmas, "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16).

So, what kind of child shall we be?

"All You Need Is Love!"— as in 1 Corinthians 13 ("The Love Chapter"). There it says "*when I became a man, I put away childish things.*" During my drug years, I listened to the Beatles and others—even Elton John, but I long-since "*became a man.*"

Recently, Sir Elton wants to ban all religion. Let's be child-like, not childish!

