

PEACE THIS
CHRISTMAS
celebrating the birth of
THE LAMB



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A peaceful Christmas? Is that really going to happen?

When life is stressful, will peace miraculously descend on the 25th December to overcome our fears and anxieties?

Some may make a special effort to try to spread a little happiness. But even if our spirits are lifted for a day or two, Christmas will pass, and we will be back to our anxious state.

But the Bible gives a different perspective. It assures us that, regardless of what life throws at us, we can experience lasting peace – and hope and joy. And it is because of the miraculous birth of Jesus to a virgin a little over 2,000 years ago.

It is crucial to understand who Jesus really is and the reason for His coming to earth.

First, JESUS ... is God

We know from the Bible that –

✦ Jesus existed ‘in the beginning’

There was never a time when Jesus did not exist. Contrary to what many people think, He did not come into being as a baby. He has always existed – from ‘the beginning’.

✦ Jesus is God

He is the Son of God but is Himself fully God.

✦ Jesus created everything

With God the Father, Jesus created everything.

The Bible: John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word¹, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Second, JESUS ... became a Man

Jesus, was with His Father in heaven (from ‘the beginning’), but was born as a baby to Mary, a virgin.

He took on the nature of a human and yet, He did not cease to be God. He had two natures – the divine and the human: He was both fully God and fully man.

So Jesus experienced all the human emotions that we do. But, unlike every other person who has ever lived, He did not inherit a sinful nature: He remained perfectly holy.

The Bible: John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

The Bible (NLT): Colossians 2:9

For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.

¹ The writer uses ‘Word’ to refer to Jesus.

Third, JESUS ... 'the Lamb of God' ...

Many nativity scenes feature lambs brought by the shepherds when they visited Jesus.

About thirty years later, as Jesus began His public teaching ministry, He was spoken of as 'the Lamb of God'. They were the words of John the Baptist, whom God had chosen to prepare the people for Jesus' coming.

The Bible: John 1:29

... John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

... who takes away the sin of the world.

And John explained that title – Jesus had left His Father, and the security of heaven, to rescue people by paying the penalty for their sin.

The Bible: John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

But why did John speak of Jesus as the Lamb?

The sacrifice of lambs by the priests was crucial to Jewish religious life. A lamb was sacrificed to pay the penalty for the people's sins.

Jesus came to earth to be the ultimate and perfect sacrifice for us; we all stand guilty before God on account of our sin.

The Bible: Romans 3:23

... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ...

Sin ...

... is our rebellious and disobedient nature with which we are born; it causes us to want to live our own way and disregard God's rules. Our sin separates us from God, and He hates it.

Because God is just, He cannot simply turn a blind eye to our sin: there must be justice – and justice was served when Jesus willingly sacrificed His life.

Jesus spoke of Himself as ‘the good shepherd’ who ‘lays down his life for the sheep’.¹ And He did just that, enduring the most cruel and savage death. He was mocked and brutally beaten and then crucified; His death had been prophesied 700 years earlier by the prophet, Isaiah.

The Bible: Isaiah 53:3,7

*He was despised and rejected by mankind ...
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter ...*

So, John the Baptist was also right, when he announced Jesus as the Lamb. As Jesus sacrificed His own life, God was able to remove the sins of everyone who truly repents and chooses to follow Jesus.

The Bible: 2 Corinthians 5:21

God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

¹The Bible: John 10:11

After three days, Jesus was raised to life, and forty days later, He returned to His Father in heaven.

One day, Jesus will return to earth without any warning – like a ‘thief in the night’¹. This world will be replaced by a new heaven and a new earth². His followers, who have had their sin forgiven, will enjoy ‘everlasting life’ there. But all who have rejected Jesus will face His wrath and be punished.

And so, we all have a crucial decision to make, which will determine whether we experience immense joy, or overwhelming anguish, when Jesus returns.

Jesus will welcome us then if we welcome Him into our life now, by –

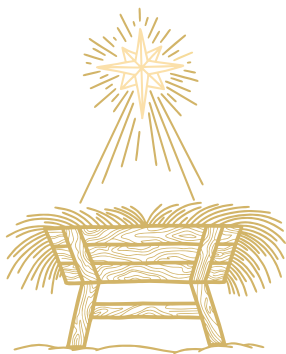
- acknowledging our sin,
- asking God to forgive us, believing that Jesus took the punishment, when He sacrificed His life,
- choosing, with God’s help, to live to please Him.

¹The Bible: 1Thessalonians 5:2; ²The Bible: Revelation 21:1

If you are not a true follower of Jesus (or if you are unsure), please take time this Christmas to reflect on what the Bible teaches: why Jesus came to earth, and why – and how – we must be ready for His return.

On His return, Jesus will only welcome those who are already at peace with God, through believing that He, the Lamb, has taken away their sin. For them, there will be unimaginable and everlasting peace and joy, with no more death or crying or pain¹.

If you are already trusting in the Lamb of God as your Saviour, may you experience much joy as you celebrate His birth, and as you look forward to the inheritance that is kept in heaven for you².



¹The Bible: Revelation 21:4; ²The Bible: 1 Peter 1:6-9

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

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