



RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

Letters of Faith

December 2014

**“I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the first and the last,
the beginning and the end.”**

Revelation 22:13 NASB

Dearly Beloved,

The month of December, and the way we relate to all the meaningful Christian activities that it contains, makes us think of these words from Jesus. We look forward to the world-wide corporate celebration of the birth of our Lord, which marks the beginning of God’s complete and final revelation of Himself to us. And yet we also start looking back over the happenings of the nearly completed year.

The beginning and the end...December is indeed the one month of the year in which we all tend to get rather sentimental, nostalgic, and somewhat introspective. The fact is, December is much more of a “take stock and inventory” month with most of us than January.

Unfortunately, many of God’s kids have been reminded in this season that as children their behavior record for the past year determined if they would receive a “reward” around the Christmas tree. They anxiously wondered whether they had been judged “naughty or nice,” or if nice, “nice enough?” Had they “measured up” to their parents’ expectations, or (gulp) to God’s? Did the scarcity (or the abundance) of gifts they would be receiving silently signify an accurate evaluation of their efforts to “be good for goodness sake,” or the extent of their parents’ love towards them, or of God’s approval of them?

So with fear they often formed new “resolutions” in their hearts and in their minds for the new year ahead. *“I’ll start over again, and this year I’ll do better, just you watch and see.”*

The real meaning of Christmas was thus lost in focusing on their faults, the fear that they wouldn’t receive what they wanted, and the concern that the presents they were planning to give were not sufficient to convey the love-message they wanted. We pray that this does NOT describe your experiences with Christmas past, but for far too many it does.

Jesus’ words in John 10:10 were that He came to give us LIFE. So the enduring spirit of the Christian Christmas celebration should be focused on the coming of this New Life with each present we give and receive, with each greeting we minister, with each carol we sing, with each decoration we re-hang, and with every special traditional function we attend or observe.

Jesus’ birth as a human baby, His life as a spiritual man, and His death as the sacrificial lamb were orchestrated by the Holy Spirit at God’s command to declare the end of an era of Satan’s dominion and the beginning of the era of the Kingdom of

God. It marked the end of the old covenant and the beginning of the new—the new covenant which allows us former Gentiles to be included in God’s promises to the righteous Jews. Now we are both invited in to God’s Kingdom through belief in Jesus Christ as the resurrected Son of God.

Hebrews 7:18-19 tells us: **“For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.”**

Jesus’ birth, life, death, and resurrection revealed the fact that God **“...appointed [His Son] heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And [Jesus] is the radiance of (God’s) glory and the exact representation of His nature...”** (Hebrews 1:2-3). **“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.”** (Colossians 1:18)

This is who is portrayed lying helplessly as a baby in the manger! He, **“who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.”** (Philippians 2:6-7)

Some years ago, we wanted to express this exciting truth in a way that would be forever engraved on the minds and hearts of our children and the congregation of the church we were pastoring. The Lord heard our prayer and gave us graphic instructions. He directed us to build a simple wooden manger (two feet square, eight inches deep, and eighteen inches high) and fill it with nonflammable hay. Our children loved being part of such an exciting construction project and zealously measured, sawed, glued, hammered, nailed (and re-nailed), stained and sealed that precious little vessel. It was crude, but looked suitable to represent man’s clumsy efforts to create a suitable love nest for God’s greatest gift to man. To us, and the Holy Spirit, it looked beautiful!

On Christmas Eve we brought our lovingly-constructed little manger to our Christmas service and placed a tray with the Communion bread and wine on top of the hay. After blessing the bread and the wine, we invited the church to come forward in turn by families and friends, to kneel at the side of the manger, and to let their minds and spirits dwell on the birth of this little child whose destiny was to be their saving grace. We encouraged them to see this divine baby as the beginning of hope and the end of Satan’s control over us—to see Him as the little lamb who was at the same time the awesome Lion of Judah—to see the cross beckoning to Him beyond the manger.

As we shared Communion with each other, we sensed the awesome flow of God’s unfathomable love towards us—the love that was willing to die to pay the judgment against us, to ransom us from our sentence of death. Many saints were set free from wondering if they had been “good enough” the previous year to receive the gifts they had been desiring, and thought only of the awesome gift of Life that our Almighty Father God had given us, not because in any way we deserved it, but solely because He loved us.

What a blessing to know that **“Jesus [Himself] has become the guarantee of a better covenant”** (Hebrews 7:22) by **“the power of an indestructible life.”** (Hebrews 7:16) **“Hence, also, He is able to save forever those [of us] who draw**

near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for [us].”
(Hebrews 7:25)

We took that precious manger home with us that Christmas Eve, and we hid our little love gifts to our children in the hay for them to find next morning. We had a very special experience that Christmas of our Father God’s special love gift to us—His Son, Jesus!

Our prayer is that your Christmas memories will be wrapped up in the warm, sure knowledge that **“the old things [have] passed away...new things have come.”** (2 Corinthians 5:17) May **“...mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.”** in Jesus’ name! (Jude 2)

Dear Heavenly Father, help me to focus on the whole person of Jesus this season of corporately celebrating Your giving Him to us here on the earth! Help me to see the Man in the Baby, the Lion in the Lamb, the sacrifice in the gift! Help me to filter out all of the worldly clutter that has polluted the simplicity and purity of Jesus’ birth. Amen.

Huge Christmas Hugs,



Holy Spirit P.S.

Will you give me liberty to share this just as it happened?

I was making a final read-through of this letter just before sending it off for proofing and printing when I sensed the Holy Spirit wanted to add to it: *We hear your prayer and say Amen to it. But for your protection you must at all times also keep in focus the Truth that no matter how horrific the storms are against His Lordship, Jesus is truly Lord of all, the government of the universe is on His shoulders, and He is the **Prince of Peace.***

Then, as if to certify this word, Isaiah 9:6 sprang to mind: **“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.”**

May God seal this word in your heart as you proclaim Christ Jesus’ birth.