

THE SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS



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Luke 2:11 **Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.**

BE THANKFUL

By Evangelist Dennis A. Palma

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You, praise You, and bless You, for Your never ending Blessing of Your Son Christ Jesus. May we as children of God, take time daily to reflect upon the joy of the birth of Your Son Jesus Christ. Father, help us not to get too distracted this Christmas season with all the holiday hoopla. Father, please help us all to better worship Christ Jesus, the true reason for the season. May we all be thankful, for His everlasting Gift. I ask this in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The story of the Birth of Christ is one of Divine intervention from God above. It is a story that goes back over 2000 years ago. According to the Bible, it started out with a woman named Mary. Mary at that time, was a virgin that was hand pick by the Father, to be the vehicle for the birth of God's Son Jesus. Luke 1:28 When the angel of God first appear to her he said greetings you are highly favored! The Lord is with you Verse :29: Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. Verse 30: But the angel said to her, " Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. Verse 31: You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. Verse 32 : He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of of His father David. Verse 33: and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end. Then the story goes on where Mary questions the angel about how can she have a child, when she was still a virgin. The angel went on to say that the " The Holy Spirit " will come upon her and the power of the Most High will overshadow her, so the Holy One to be born will be called, the Son of God. Mary at that time was pledge to marry Joseph. Matthew I;19:Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. Verse 20: But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. Verse 21: She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. And the angel went on to say in Verse22-24: All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ("The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" which means, " God with us.) The prophet they were talking about was Isaiah and it was written between 700-680 B.C. The scripture is Isaiah 7:14. "When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. In Chapter 2 from the book of Matthew talks about after Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod the Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, Where is the one who has been born the King of the Jews ? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him. When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law,

he asked them where the Christ was to be born. In Bethlehem they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written.

The story goes on to say that Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find Him report to me so that I too may go and worship Him. After they heard the King, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold, and of incense, and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Herod back in the days of the birth of Christ, was just another example of the hatred and disrespect that most people have for Jesus Christ. Just look at the way people react in some parts of the world, when His name is mentioned. There are a lot of places where they will execute you if they think you are a part of the Lord's family.

The greatest thing that this country has, is our religious freedom, and without it, we would not have Christmas. Christmas is a great time of the year, to reflect on all the blessing we share in Christ Jesus. Please believe me when I tell you, the blessings are not what you see in the stores and the malls. These blessings are forever, not just a fleeting moment of pleasure because you got the things that you asked for Christmas. You see, the blessing of the birth of Christ goes far beyond any gift that comes from man.

This gift is one that none of us sinful souls deserve. In John 3:16 the Lord says: **"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.** God did not say that who ever believes in Him, will get any materialistic thing that their heart desires, things that are perishable! No, He said in Jesus you will not spiritually perish, but will have eternal life with Him in Paradise! Most people do not have a clue about what I am saying. I know this to be a fact, because I was the same way until Jesus saved my sinful soul. The way I look at Christmas now is, what poor soul can I do something nice for Christmas. I ask God to help me to be more giving and helpful, to the less fortunate souls of this world. By asking the Lord this, the Holy Spirit then fills me up with the inspiration and understanding I need to do the things that are pleasing to Him, and not myself.

So my brothers and sisters, try not to let the holiday glitter and folly, take away your thanks and praise for the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ this season. Have some fun, take some time to enjoy the holiday, but take some special time out to be thankful for the eternal gift that God has made available for all of us to receive, from the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. **May we all be Thankful!** Hallelujah, Hallelujah..... Amen

December's Edition of Hope for Living
The Joy of Christmas By Billy Graham

Matthew 2:10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.
Every year people write me saying how much they dread Christmas. Often their complaint stems from how busy they will be, or how much money they will spend. Did those wise men who journeyed hundreds of miles across the desert to seek out the infant Jesus ever feel that way? After all, it took months to make the arduous trip, and they had gone to great expense to provide gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh for the new child.

I doubt it. In fact, as their journey neared its end we read they had "exceedingly great joy." What made the difference? Their focus was totally on Jesus, the One who would be called "Immanuel." God with us" Matthew 1:23

Don't let this Christmas season overwhelm you. Don't feel that you have to do everything, or go into debt just to impress other people. Focus instead on Jesus. Take time every day to read the prophecies of His coming, and the wonderful story of His birth. Make this Christmas one of "exceedingly great joy"!

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Lord help us all to pray for the sick, the poor, the homeless, the hopeless, the persecuted, the hungry, the helpless, the deceased, the lost souls, our Government and the Governments of the world, the troops in harms way, and for peace in the world. Also a special prayer for Jeff Haines, Jeff Rafter, Anne Marie Kalogridis, Tim Height, Janet Litiski, Keith Ruggiero, Rene DeMatteo, Carly Napolliello, Joe Hinley, Jennifer Smit, Janet Neil, Candice Kjana, Tony Scarangelli, Robin Weiss, Vince Phillipelli, Jerry Owens, John Aquillino, Sherry Arzillo, Felicia Rumbow, Carmen LeBoy Nancy Flecker, Alice Mesmer, Penny Howe, Bruno Ambrose, Diane Cabana, Marian Ortez, Lucy Cartogena, Ryan Donnelly, Peg Ballerino, Robert Lambert.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Years 2008, From the Spiritual Connection.

