

## Christmas

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*Isaiah 52:7-10; Ps 98; Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14*

This passage from Isaiah is from the second part of Isaiah's writing and it deals with the joyful expectation of going home from their time in captivity.

### GOING HOME

The reading celebrates the runner who brings the good news//and expresses the great joy of celebration in returning to their homeland.

Hebrews—not Paul

Recalls God speaking to the people via the prophets such as Isaiah.

But now "in these last days" he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things.

As a child reflects the nature and appearance of parents, so too does this son reflect God's glory and the exact imprint of God's being and sustains all things by his powerful *word*.

Rejoicing in the *word* of the message in Isaiah, about going home ...

Hebrews recognises that Jesus is no less than the one through whom God's *word* is spoken.

The Gospel speaks of the Word becoming flesh and living among us making known God's glory and revealing God as a God of grace and truth. God dwelling not in buildings and organizations but in person and in people who receive him, who believe in his name.

Christmas is about God speaking words of Hope, Joy, Love and Peace to humanity.

At Christmas we are called to think about a child who bears the image of God and who grows to reveal that image

in practical action and attitude

in kindness and acceptance

in the welcoming of children

and [using] children as signs of what is required of God's role.

Jesus grows to be the son "par excellence" But he is also a reminder that we *all* bear the image of God. The creation stories tell us that!

I do not believe we are here to be at odds with Muslims just because they are Muslims, or Buddhists or Jews or Hindus, for they all bear the image of God too.

What our task is—is to ourselves grow into the image God has for us and to introduce people to the Jesus who shows us how...

Paul's letter to Titus!

As much as we are called to reflect the image of God, we find we do not.

Or at least we are more aware of how we do not... and we are not very good at telling people how they do reveal God. This story of the Birth of Jesus at Christmas is about how he grew to reveal the likeness of God *and* about our potential for the same

BUT IT ALSO REVEALS a truth about God.

In a world of terrorism in various parts, including Israel  
of war and occupation in Iraq  
of HIV/AIDS in South Africa  
of Detention Centres and Asylum Seekers  
of troubles in our Health System  
where children need to be protected from predatory adults  
of bushfire, droughts and (occasional) flooding rain  
the birth of Jesus reminds us that God is NOT a spectator/observer—But so often in Jesus  
God pronounces both Love and Judgement on our human situation.

Now I know there are difficulties and in some of these situations there are people giving their time and energy to resolving and overcoming them...

As we think of the myths and legends surrounding the birth of Jesus, we remember who and what he became, we might also ponder the stories of our own arrival in this world and ponder what we have become—how we reveal the image of God and has God acted through us.

We need I think to reflect on the birth of each child and see them as signs of hope for God's world.