



**Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.**

### **December 2013**

Consumerism really ramps up this time of year. All forms of media urge us to spend our dollars on gifts right now. They want us to feel hopeful, grateful, wealthy, anything to have us forget the national debt, personal debt, any kind of debt. "Give a gift that matters," a large sporting goods store tells us on the way in to shop. "Gift like the Gifter" says a major home goods store.

I thought about it. Hey, Christmas is about giving. Giving is good for the giver and blesses the recipient, especially when we gift like the Gifter and give a gift that matters to someone else. Perhaps I need correction here, but as far as I can tell, those of us who remember that Christmas is about the birth of Christ (it's His birthday celebration, though not the actual date of His birth) give gifts to each other in honor of Him...and that's the way He likes it!

No one gifts like the true Gifter. No one has given a gift that matters like the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent by the Father for the salvation of His that His might have eternal life in Him. Prophecies foretold it, the coming of a Messiah. Holy angels announced it. Wise men came to lay gold, frankincense, and myrrh at His manger in worship of this newborn king. Mary pondered things in her heart about Him. Joseph demonstrated supernatural restraint, understanding, and obedience to the will of the Almighty. Anna saw the fruit of her fastings and prayers in serving God; and Simeon lived to see the consolation of Israel.

The one who gives gifts that matter, the one who blesses another, stands on higher ground. Certainly, all glory should go to God in the Highest, for His gift to us of Jesus. It is God who stands as the Most High and who condescends to extend His hand of grace under us that He might lift us up for the purpose of reconciling us to Himself. God desires to be our God and for us to be His people, His special treasure, a people who can live in a face-to-face relationship before Him, serving Him in holiness and righteousness, without fear, all the days of our lives.

And then there's the gift. Jesus. Jesus came wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. The Bread of Heaven came laying in straw, surrounded by animals and people, with signs in the heavens to tell of His glory. In beginning-ness the Word always was. And the Word always was

with (face-to-face) God, and the Word always was God. And now in His incarnation, the Word became flesh and dwelt or tabernacled among us and we beheld His glory, full of grace and truth.

The people that sit in darkness have seen a great light, but this Light came in humility; a surprise to those in the spirit world who knew Him as God the Son, the Son of God, of the God-kind. Jesus came taking on human-kind.

Why? Why would someone leave their glorious home and life of nothing but love and grace and purity to take on a human nature in a human body and set aside all the privileges (though not Godness) of being God? Why agree to be sin-bearer and curse-bearer all of His life, starting at birth, to stand in the place of a people whom God chose to be His own, a people who were by nature children of wrath, who were enmity towards God, who wanted to rob God by usurping His position and by over-reaching authority? Why?

Jesus had no personal sin. He took on the role of Surety of a New Covenant in His Blood, paying the price of redemption by power and by price to ransom the people given to Him by the Father, a people of whom Jesus said that He would lose none. He mediated this Covenant as the only Mediator between God and man, Himself being the perfect High Priest, offering Himself as victim (Lamb of God) and being Himself the One who brings the offering to the Father. He came that we might have life in Him, abundant life, eternal life. And He finished what He came to do, but that's a story for later.

*And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph,*

*And the babe lying in a manger. Luke 2:16*

Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, of whom it is said that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, was born in a humble manger. The proud will not look for Him there. What! With the animals? I never. But the wise will seek Him out until they find Him, wherever He is, to acknowledge the Truth, to lay gifts before Him, to worship Him.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by/through Jesus Christ. To follow Him as the Way is the narrow walk of humility, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. The Truth is Jesus Himself, for the Father is God only wise, and the Holy Spirit is Truth. Jesus is God. We can know something by lots of reading and studying and head knowledge, focusing on the process of knowing, or we can know something by coming to a point of true understanding (the "I got it!" moment) with the result that our lives are changed by what or who we know. This latter knowing is "oida" in NT Greek. It comes from seeing. Jesus is the Life, and this Life is the Light of the world.

Jesus was born of a woman, born under the Law, to die on a Cross in payment for the debt note of sin, our sins imputed to Him that His righteousness might be imputed to us. His resurrection demonstrated that the offering of His life was accepted by the Father as payment in full.

The Gifter has given the gift that matters. Now we celebrate the Gift of Jesus Christ by giving to God through our worship and service and to others, by telling the story which is the Gospel and by meeting tangible needs. So give a gift that matters; and gift like the Gifter!

Thank you for your love, prayers, and support of Mary Craig Ministries. May your eyes be opened to see the Christ in Jesus, lying in the manger, and may your ears be opened to His Voice calling you to Himself, and may your hearts be turned that you might have the Life that is in Him.

For His Glory,

*Mary Craig*

Mary Craig, D.P.M.



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