



Dec 21, 2010

...Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm 105:4)

volume 1 • #1

Stars E.J.R.3

Stars shine bright,
Lend your light,
Broken hearts cry alone in the darkness;
Tell them of the night
You witnessed the sight
Of One leaving home for that darkness
How He came down to lie
 on a cold bed of straw,
In a land where broken hearts
 never cease;
But tell them to look
In His sweet eyes of love,
And there they will find heaven's peace.

Hal-le-lu-iah,
All ye stars rejoice in the heavens.
Hal-le-lu-iah
Let all sorrow melt in peace.

Soon comes the day
You'll part your bright ways
For the One who once spoke you to being;
Not a babe so forlorn,
But the Bright Star of Morn,
Who has come with healing in His wings.
And your brightness will fade
 in the presence of His glory,
When He comes to destroy
 all that's dark;
Then His children of love
He will call high above,
Where they'll out shine the brightest stars.

Hal-le-lu-iah
All ye stars rejoice in the heavens.
Hal-le-lu-iah
Let all sorrow melt in peace.

•ejr3

The true message of Christmas affords us the one time that it is more blessed to receive than to give.

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Feature Article:

We Must Listen to Him!

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich (2Cor 2:9).

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard (Heb 2:1).

The old bishop rose to his feet, and with a raised hand brought an instant calm amidst the frenzied dancing and loud singing of about one hundred Xhosa worshippers who had packed into the little mud roundhouse. A significant number wore the amulets and markings of witchdoctors. Indeed, many of the bishops among them were themselves witchdoctors. Their “Christianity” was a blend of tidbits of truth heard from missionaries long ago, and their native animism and ancestor-worship.

As calmness enveloped the room, a wisp of dust gently blew through the open door from the parched ground outside into the sweltering heat of the little room. The old man began to speak with solemn earnestness.

“Our visitor, today, came from America,” he said in his native tongue. “He left his home and family and his church to travel for over 18 hours in a skywagon to come to Africa. It cost more money than we all make together in a year. He has come over these difficult roads to our village to speak to us. I can't imagine it. Why would someone do all that for us. But he is here, and if he did all of that to be here, we better listen seriously to what he has to say.”

A flood of mixed emotions swept over me. What seemed to him like an unimaginable sacrifice, wasn't really that much. Yes, it did cost a lot of money; yes, I did miss my wife and home; and, yes, these old bones don't travel as well as they used to. But the thrill of having the opportunity to be a tiny part of what God was doing among these dear people far surpassed any little sacrifice on my part.

I also was quite embarrassed. My dear missionary friend seated beside me sacrificed much more than I on a daily bases to bring the gospel to these villages. It seemed so inappropriate to have such adulation heaped

upon me. Nevertheless, I knew the old bishop was totally sincere, and very eager to have all his people hear the message I would bring to them that day.

Putting my own feelings aside, I realized that the bishop had given me a perfect segue into presenting the gospel. As I rose I was conscious of the Spirit's enablement to powerfully proclaim the One who *did* leave His home and sacrifice everything to bring salvation, and the message of salvation to us. I kept hearing the bishops words. *If he did all that... we must listen carefully to what he has to say.*

As we celebrate the coming of our Lord into the world, do we feel the gravity of what He sacrificed? Do we therefore feel compelled to take very seriously what He has spoken? Is the gospel message, to us, robed in the wonderment of so great a gift at such a high cost? Let us consider carefully His sacrifice this Christmas.

1. He left a place of unspeakable glory and beauty and entered into a world of sin and darkness, where He was placed on a cold bed of straw. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

2. He left the throne of deity to become a humble servant. *Being in the form of God, [He] did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil 2:6-8).*

3. He left the perennial adoration and praise of the holy angels to be hated and abused by men. *He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (Isaiah 53:3)*

4. He forsook the purity of eternal holiness to have pressed upon His being the unimaginable defilement of the sins of the world. *And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2Cor 5:21).*

5. And, perhaps the greatest portion of His sacrifice, He left the eternal love and communion of His Father, to become the object of the Father's

wrath. *My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me? (Matt 27:46). Yet it pleased the LORD to crush Him (Isaiah 53:10).*

This is what He did for us. Should we not, therefore, *give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard? How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation (Heb 2:3)?*

In a little mud house in Africa, several Xhosa amaZi-*oni did* take heed to the message of Christ's sacrifice for them. Among them was the old bishop, "For so many years," he said, "I have preached a lie. Now I shall preach the truth of Jesus Christ!"

Have you taken heed to the message of Christ? *We all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (that glory for which we all were created) (Rom 3:23). All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53: 6). For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).*

Turn from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. (1Thess 1:9). Believing and trusting in Jesus, cast your life into His loving arms. ●ejr3

*May you have
a most happy
and blessed
Christmas and
New Year.*

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