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THE DEAF MESSENGER

An Inspirational Magazine for the Deaf



“She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. There was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:7).

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The purpose of this magazine is to inform the deaf reader about such topics as practical Christian living; basic Bible truths; and what the past, present, and future historical events mean to each of us. This magazine attempts to cover spiritual, mental, and physical aspects in its articles and columns.

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Do You Have Christmas Peace?

By David M. Trexler

“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth *peace*, good will toward men!” Luke 2:14, NKJV, emphasis added.



ConstanceMcGee/6topphoto

Out in the field the shepherds were caring for their sheep, and they were wondering about their future when the Romans

ruled Israel with iron hands. During the time of Roman rule Israel experienced no peace because some of the Israelites fought against the

Roman occupation. Many of them were killed and injured. Many people were not happy. Then a surprising thing happened when Jesus Christ was born in a stable in Bethlehem. The Jews who were looking forward to a Messiah didn't know it at all. But, the angels of the Lord appeared before the shepherds and they gave wonderful news to the whole world. The angels said, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth *peace*, good will toward men [men and women]!" (Luke 2:14, NKJV, emphasis added).

But, after the wise men visited Joseph and Mary with the baby Jesus, Joseph was warned to leave immediately from Bethlehem for Egypt. Why? King Herod ordered his soldiers to kill all baby boys under 2 years old. Many parents were shocked and sad when their baby boys were killed. Now, didn't the angels say that there would be peace on earth because of baby Jesus? What kind of peace did the angel mean? There has been no peace all over the world since the birth of our

Savior. Were the angels joking? No! So, what peace has God promised to us?

Peace is about the spiritual relationship between human beings and God, not about the physical peace in this old sinful world. War, fighting, and violence have grown worse than ever before. There was no peace during the time of Adam and Eve. Remember Cain who killed his brother? Violence was so bad in Noah's time that God sent the Flood to destroy the wicked people. Now, you can read the news that show violence is happening all over the world as well as in our neighborhood. No peace at all! God didn't promise peace in this wicked world. He promised spiritual peace to all who have accepted Him as Savior and Lord. If we have peace with God we would have peace with other people. We don't do violence against them at all. "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. . . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37, 39).

In our human nature we are sinful and rebellious against God. We are at war against God spiritually. “The sinful mind is at war with God. It does not obey God’s law. It can’t. Those who are controlled by their sinful nature can’t please God” (Romans 8:7, 8). Isaiah made it clear that we are not having peace with God. “There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked” (Isaiah 57:21, NKJV). Clearly, as long as we are sinning against God we do not have peace in our hearts. When we do not have peace with God we tend to fight and do violence against other people. There is no love in war. There is no love in rebellion. It is hate.

How do we get peace in our hearts as God promises? “We have been made right with God because of our faith. Now we have peace with him because of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus we have received God’s grace. In that grace we stand. We are full of joy because we expect to share in God’s glory” (Romans 5:1, 2). It is through faith in

Jesus Christ we have peace with God. We accept God’s grace to forgive our sins and repent of our sins and turn away from sins. We are stop rebelling against God when we have faith in Him. In other words, we have peace with God through faith. Apostle Paul clearly said: “God was pleased to bring all things back to himself because of what Christ has done. That includes all things on earth and in heaven. God made peace through Christ’s blood, through his death on the cross. At one time you were separated from God. You were enemies in your minds because of your evil ways. But because Christ died, God has brought you back to himself. Christ’s death has made you holy in God’s sight. So now you don’t have any flaw. You are free from blame” (Colossians 1:20-22). We are normally at war with God before we accept Jesus Christ. We are not right with God when we sin. But, God’s great sacrificial love causes us to repent and confess our sins to Him. We are forgiven by Him, and we have peace with Him. We ourselves

cannot make peace. Only God can. "Let the peace that Christ gives rule in your hearts. As parts of one body, you were appointed to live in peace. And be thankful" (Colossians 3:15). Jesus promised us peace when He comforted His disciples. "I leave my peace with you. I give my peace to you. I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not be afraid" (John 14:27).

Does having peace with God protect us from the world's troubles and war? No, we still have to face many of the world's problems, but we can handle them better because of having peace with God through faith in Him who is in charge of our lives. That kind of peace God gives is what we need the most for salvation. It is saving peace we need. We still do experience sufferings in this world, but we have joy in our hearts while anyone who does not have Christ in his heart does not have true peace. "I have told you these things, so that you can have peace because of me. In this

world you will have trouble. But cheer up! I have won the battle over the world" (John 16:33).

As long as we are in this world we will experience temptations, trials, and tribulations, but we become better Christians through them. Let me repeat the text from Romans 5:1, 2 as above with the addition of verses 3 to 5 that will give us hope.

"We have been made right with God because of our faith. Now we have peace with him because of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus we have received God's grace. In that grace we stand. We are full of joy because we expect to share in God's glory. And that's not all. *We are full of joy even when we suffer. We know that our suffering gives us the strength to go on. The strength to go on produces character. Character produces hope. And hope will never let us down. God has poured his love into our hearts. He did it through the Holy Spirit, whom he has given to us*" (Romans 5:1-5,

emphasis added).

Spiritual peace with God is very important for having hope and joy through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as we live in this wicked world of fighting and hate. We no longer follow the ways of the world. We now are following Christ's loving way. As a born-again Christians we do not hate anyone at all. God's laws are written in our hearts so we are guided by the Holy Spirit, who is full of love and peace.

Jesus Christ wants His character to be developed in all of us. Sometimes sufferings help us to be closer to God than before and to strengthen our faith and character in the likeness of Christ. We have garden tools. A shovel is one of them. The steel blade of the shovel is hardened steel. The steel becomes hardened or stronger through the process of very high temperature and cooling with water quickly. That process is similar to our experience with trials, persecutions, and sufferings.

Do you want to have Christmas peace? Yes, I

encourage you to surrender your hearts of hate, doubt and violence to Jesus who can cleanse you from all sins that cause some of the world's problems. Let us have peace with God through Jesus Christ who died for us so that we can have true peace in our hearts. That peace will show our love for our fellow members, neighbors, and enemies. And that true peace with God helps us to live victoriously through all kinds of problems of this world. Peace from God in our hearts prepares us for the heavenly kingdom where there are no sins and troubles forever. Let the Christmas peace rule in your hearts every day as Paul said, "I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31, NKJV).

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Christmas

By Bruce Buzzell



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A long time ago when we were little children during Christmas time, we would get together with our families, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins and set up the tree with decorations, hang our stockings upon the chimney mantle and look forward to December 25. This was the day when all the presents arrived under the Christmas tree. We would open the presents with excitement to

see what toys we would play with. Then the families would eat a big dinner and enjoy their time together. This was the high point of the holiday.

That day must have been an important day to many people because no work was done and school was closed for about a week just to honor this holiday. Why is this holiday so important to many people? Is it all about getting presents or meeting families and friends? No. It

was all about Jesus' birth almost 2,000 years ago. Does that mean Jesus was born on December 25? Probably not. We do not know the date Jesus was born. However, there is a clue from the Bible that we can figure out the general time He was born. Luke 2:8 says, "Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night" (NKJV).

It was an ancient custom among the Jews during the time of Jesus. The shepherds sent out their sheep to the fields and deserts around early spring and brought them home in the fall. The sheep were kept out in the open country during the whole summer. The shepherds had not yet brought home their flock when Jesus was born at Bethlehem. No sheep were out on the field on December 25 during the winter time. It is more likely Jesus was born during the summer or fall season.

So does that mean we should stop celebrating Christmas on December 25

because we do not know when Jesus was born? No. There is nothing wrong with remembering Christ's birth at any time of the year. People all over the world are thinking about Jesus' birth in December. Christians can think about Christ's birth at that time too.

There are two ways to celebrate Christmas. One way is the materialistic way the world celebrates the day. People focus on buying lots of things for their families and friends. The other way is to recognize that Christmas is a celebration of Jesus Christ's birth. It is always nice to have family and friends get together for Christmas. It is also a good time to think about Christ's birth on this earth that brought salvation to our world. Without Jesus on earth, all of us would have no chance to go to heaven.

Why did Jesus come to earth? It was John 3:16 that brought Him to earth, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (NKJV).

This is true love.

Jesus saw all the people in our world trapped in sin and unable to get out of earth without sin. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (NKJV). So, Jesus volunteered to die on the cross and gave us the best gift ever. Romans 6:23 tells us what the gift is, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (NKJV). This is the best Christmas present any person can get from God. Jesus gave up His life so all of us can live a life in heaven with Him. No earthy gift can match our Lord Jesus Christ's gift of eternal life.

We cannot save ourselves from eternal destruction. On earth Jesus never sinned in His life. Hebrews 4:14-15 says, "Since we have a great high priest, Jesus the Son of God, who has gone into heaven, let us hold on to the faith we have. For our high priest is able to understand our weaknesses. He was tempted in every way that we are, but he did

not sin" (NCV). Christ is in heaven now working with God, our Father, to save us from eternal death. He understands our weaknesses and He helps us to live clean lives.

As December approaches, when we usually get excited about Christmas holidays with presents, family get-togethers, having time off from work or school, let us find a good time to celebrate this Christmas holiday by thinking about Jesus Christ's earthly work in saving people from everlasting destruction and to share the good news with other people about Jesus' greatest gift toward us. Jesus is the reason for the Christmas holiday celebration.

Bruce Buzzell is a Deaf writer who lives in the metropolitan area of St. Louis, MO.

Did the Three Wise Men Visit Jesus in the Stable?

By Paul Kelly



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When Christmas comes near, the nativity (the birth of Christ) displays appear in the stores, in people's homes, in the front lawn of their homes and the churches. Many Christmas cards and pictures show the nativity scene. It often shows a stable with donkey, cow, sheep, and lamb. There it shows a manger with baby Jesus lying in it. (The manger is a long open box for horses or

cattle to eat from). A couple of shepherds are shown. Also Joseph and Mary are standing by looking at baby Jesus. In addition, we notice the three wise men visiting baby Jesus in the manger inside the stable. We accept this way because we have been told over the years. Did the three wise men actually visit baby Jesus inside the stable?

Year after year, we accept

the way the nativity story goes without questioning the accuracy of the story. Let me tell you a story about a spider that I heard. A famous Greek philosopher Aristotle told people that the spider has six legs. For about 2,000 years, many people believed the spider had six legs. No one even bothered to count. One day, a biologist and naturalist decided to count the legs of the spider. It turned out to be EIGHT instead of six legs! Many people never bother to count the spider legs. It is the same thing that many of us often accept the tradition the way we have been told without checking it out. Let us check with our Bible how the nativity story actually happened and how it has influenced us all. Matthew 2:1-18 and Luke 2:1-20 tell us the story of Christ's birth.

In the days of Caesar Augustus who was an emperor of the Roman Empire, a decree (law) went out requiring everyone to return to his own city to be registered for census purpose (Luke 2:1-3). Joseph and Mary left

Nazareth for Bethlehem, which was their ancestral home to be registered (v. 4, 5). When they arrived at Bethlehem, they couldn't find a room at any inn (v. 7). It was probably that many people came down to be registered in that city causing the inns to get full. This then forced Joseph and Mary stay in a stable where the animals were kept. That was where Baby Jesus was born in the manger (v. 7). Around that time, the angels announced to the shepherds who were out in the field at that time. They gave them good news about baby Jesus being born and told them to find him lying in a manger in the city of David (Bethlehem) (v. 8-20). The shepherds were excited. They hurried to the city and found baby Jesus.

When the census was over, the people who stayed at inns in Bethlehem probably had gone home. By then, Joseph was able to find a house for his family to stay for a while. Mary, like any mother, needed some time to get rest and to get her strength again after

childbirth. Luke 2:21, 22 tell us about the days of her purification as required by the law of Moses (Leviticus 12:1-4). Leviticus describes mothers as having 33 days of purification after the baby receives circumcision on the eighth day (a total of 41 days). After Mary's days of purification was over, she and Joseph were able to take baby Jesus to Jerusalem, which was about 5 miles away, to be presented to the Lord (v. 22). In the temple they, including baby Jesus, received blessings (Luke 2:25-38). When this was over, they returned to Bethlehem. That was when the wise men from the East found them in the house, not the stable, and worshipped baby Jesus (Matthew 2:11).

Through the star the wise men came down to worship baby Jesus in Bethlehem. They considered the baby Jesus to be king of the Jews (Matthew 2:1, 2). They must have studied the Old Testament and discovered about the star in the East (Numbers 24:17). "Wise" men often were considered

to be of educated, powerful and wealthy families. They came from the region of the "East" that the Jews often refer to as Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia was an ancient (long time ago) area located in modern day Iraq and parts of Syria, Iran and Turkey in the Middle East. The wise men first stopped in Jerusalem as they thought they would find the King of the Jews there. But they found no one to know anything about this, not even Herod the Great (Matthew 2:1-4). Herod the Great had to call the chief priests and scribes to find out where Christ was to be born (Matthew 2:4, 5). They learned that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). The wise men saw the star again and followed it until it stood over where baby Jesus was in the house (Matthew 2:7-11).

In the house, the wise men worshipped Christ Jesus. They gave him three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Those three gifts were probably why many people thought that there were THREE wise men

while the Bible did not say how many. Herod the Great expected the wise men to report to him as to where Christ Jesus was so that he could kill him (Matthew 2:7, 8). He did not want any one to take his place as king. The wise men were warned by God in a dream that they should not see Herod but to return to their own country via a different route (Matthew 2:12).

Joseph was equally warned to take baby Jesus and Mary and flee to Egypt since Herod was planning to kill baby Jesus (Matthew 2:13, 14). They were able to go to Egypt because they received three expensive gifts they got from the wise men that helped them with their trip. Also, Mary was well enough to take a long trip after the day of purification. That was when Jesus was more than 40 days old. If Mary were to escape shortly after Jesus was born in the stable, she would have suffered from a long trip and probably would have died from the loss of blood as a result of childbirth. When Herod found out that the

wise men didn't stop by to see him but took the other way, he was very angry and ordered the killing of all male children of two years old and under (Matthew 2:16). This cannot mean that Jesus was about two years old by that time. In their time, people in that area count their birthdays different than ours. When a child is born, he or she is counted as one year old. By a year later, he or she would be counted as two years old. For us, our child would be counted as one-year-old a year later after the birth. As for Herod, he actually ordered the killing of all male children under ONE year old if we follow the way we count our birthdays. Herod was hoping that he could catch baby Jesus among the male children in Bethlehem by killing them all. Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus was later told to return home to Israel after learning from God through a dream that Herod had died (Matthew 2:19, 20).

Now you have learned the actual story about the Nativity. You may wonder why the nativity display does

not show correctly—the three wise men visiting baby Jesus in the manger inside the stable. It was probably that somebody wanted to tell the world the joy that the shepherds and the wise men had when they found Christ Jesus and worshipped Him even though they found him in different locations. As a result, the shepherds and the wise men were put together under the stable.

How many wise men and where they found baby Jesus should not be of a great concern to us as it does not affect our salvation in any way. The greatest joy of all time that the angels (Luke 2:9-14), the shepherds (Luke 2:20), and the wise men (Matthew 2:9-11) had was the birth of our Christ Jesus! Let us join their joy by bowing down and worshipping Christ Jesus! What is so important about His birth? The angel proclaimed to Mary that Jesus “will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). It is the very Jesus Christ who came to save us from sin and death that we are facing! Apostle Paul stated in Romans 5:12

that we are DOOMED to DIE because of our SINS that started with Adam. Jesus’ birth is an expression of God’s GREATEST LOVE for us by sending Him so that whoever believe in Him shall NOT DIE but have EVERLASTING LIFE (John 3:16)! Jesus’ death for us upon the cross and His resurrection SEALED our hope of getting ETERNAL LIFE and a VICTORY over sin and death. ‘O Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ (1 Corinthians 15:55 KJV). Our LONG wait for Jesus Christ to come again will soon be all over. “It will be said on that day: ‘Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation’ ” (Isaiah 25:9).

Paul Kelly is a Deaf pastor and a teacher for the Deaf who lives in Rochester, NY.

The Disaster

By Alberta Blake



RB Fried/Stockphoto.com

What prepares you when disaster strikes you, your family, your home or your community? Can disaster have anything to do with someone's health?

I believe that disaster can affect everyone's health. If a person is not prepared for a disaster strike then that person's health may be affected. A disaster strike could be the words spoken by a doctor saying that your son or daughter is having leukemia, or that you have breast cancer or prostate cancer. How does this news affect you? What happens when you hear the news that

one of your parents or a son or a daughter has just died in a car accident or by a heart attack? How does this news affect you?

How can a person prepare oneself to hear unhappy news? When your friends share with you news like this about their family you can sympathize with them but when it comes to your own family how does this news affect you? Can you face it bravely or will you fall apart.

There is an interesting verse in the Bible that says that during the last days of earth's history that people's hearts will be failing them for

fear. Jesus is talking to those who are following Him and telling what kinds of things to expect as the end of the earth is coming. "People will be so afraid they will faint, wondering what is happening to the world, because the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (Luke 21:26, NCV). You can read about them in Luke 21 starting with verse 5. There is another verse in the Bible that Paul shares with us and that is found in Romans 8:28. "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. He appointed them to be saved in keeping with his purpose." This verse tells that whatever happens to us is what God allows to happen (to us and those close to us) so we can learn to depend on His leading in our lives. We can trust that what happens to us is in God's plan for our lives. Going through this experience will help us to learn to trust in God's care. Everything will work out according to what he allows. A favorite author of mine adds these words in the book *The Desire of Ages* page 224, "God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led if they could see the end from the beginning . . ." If we could see our life

laid out before our very eyes we would not choose our life to be or go in any other way, we would and should accept God's plan for our life.

So God wants us to:

–live healthfully.

–trust in God daily.

–love life and keep active.

–enjoy sunshine in the out of doors.

–breath deeply in the fresh air.

–eat colored fruits and vegetables like colors of the rainbow (good food).

–read daily God's message to you from His word, the Bible.

–talk to him daily in prayer.

–ask God for His help everyday.

–turn your life over to Jesus each day and He will direct your path.

Only Jesus can give you peace of mind, health for the day and hope for each tomorrow. Trust always in Him and you will experience good health no matter what happens around you.

Alberta Blake is a writer who is interested in health and lives in Clive, Alberta, Canada.

Vegetarian Recipe

Special Lentil Loaf



CharnditaLalwani/Shutterstock.com

- 2 cups dry brown lentils, rinsed
- 1 teaspoon bay leaf, dried and crushed
- 8 cups water
- 1 cup uncooked fine bulgar wheat (use gluten free crumbs for
Gluten free recipe)
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 Tablespoon ketchup
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 cup onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon. dried rosemary
- Salt to taste
- 1/4 cup tomato paste

Cook lentils and bay leaf in a pot with 6 cups of water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer until lentils are soft and water has been absorbed (about 45 minutes). Combine bulgar wheat and 2 cups water in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for about 15 minutes. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Transfer lentils to a large mixing owl. Add bulgar wheat and remaining ingredients (except tomato paste). Mix well.

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