



Worship Service: 10am, 160 Paya Lebar Road, Orion@Paya Lebar #04-06, Singapore 409022
Sunday School: 11.45am, Prayer Meeting: 8pm Wednesday
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A Season of Hope - Remembering the First Advent of Christ

Introduction

Christmas, which is almost a universal holiday, is here again at the end December. It ought to be the meaningful commemoration of the birth of Jesus who came more than 2000 years ago and who died on the cross for the sins of His people (Matthew 1:21; 1 Peter 2:24). The *purpose* of His glorious and yet humble birth was for Christ to come and dwell among men so that He could save His chosen people in the fullness of time. His miraculous incarnation into this world to become one of us, was to deliver us from our sins as our Deliverer. The correct understanding of the nature of Christ is important. Jesus is the very God in human flesh (John 1:1, 14; Colossians 2:9). It is important to note that Christ is more than a mere man, rather He is the second blessed person of the holy Trinity who, by being born of the Virgin Mary (Isa 7:14), was made under the law (Gals 4:4) and subject to the same temptations and limitations that we are, but yet was without sin (Heb 4:15). We do well to remember this historic event that showcases the perfection and holiness of God and that through His life and death on the cross for the sins of many (who are called and who fully trust in Him) we will be delivered from the righteous judgment of God.

Sadly today the meaning of Christmas is lost and it has become a worldly holiday rather than a meaningful remembrance of Christ. Christmas is treated by the world as a seasonal time for businesses to thrive and make profits, for many to buy and give gifts, for children to have fun, presents and a holiday. But the abuse of things does not nullify the correct and proper remembrance of it. The "reason for this season", must be stated, is not just about getting free presents, nor fun and worldly enjoyment in watching movies, or secular revelry. The true meaning of Christmas is the awakening of the heart in the humble realisation and appreciation of the birth of the sinless one who came, lived and died for us in our place, creating in us a life of gratitude, humble service and total obedience to the new born King.

Pondering the Meaning

We are reminded by Luke that Mary pondered these things in her heart (Luke 1:26-33). It is a season for somber thinking and contemplation as we consider Christmas and its implications to us today.

It is noteworthy that Jesus' birth place was prophesied in the Old Testament. The very location of the birth of Christ was predicted by a prophet called Micah in 520 BC in Micah 5:1-2 which says, *'Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.'*

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.'

Jesus' birth from a virgin was also prophesied in the Old Testament. The prophet Isaiah also predicted in 740 BC. The coming of the Messiah and the very divine nature of the birth which is of a virgin. *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel"* (Isaiah 7:14).

Jesus' miraculous birth by the virgin Mary is undermined by some critics or sceptics today but it is clearly taught in the Old Testament in Isaiah 7:14 which says, 'Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel' and Paul in Galatians 4:4,5 also says, *'But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* Now those who believe in him can be called the sons of God because of Christ our Redeemer.

Prophecy Concerning Christ

Another prophet who also predicted the death of Christ one day is Zechariah who in Zec12:10 said, *'And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.'* Hence we see that the birth, life and ministry and death of Jesus were clearly prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled to the last details and this is a significant part of the divine plan of redemption to bring hope to fallen mankind.

Today, our sacred duty is to declare to others their need to know, seek, fear and worship Christ as the shepherds and wise men of old and to proclaim His glorious first and second coming just like John the Baptist, *'Prepare the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God'* (Isaiah 40:3). We need to evangelise hearts to seek and know Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour before it is too late. Acts 16:31 says, *'And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.'*

Christ – The Hope of Life

What or who gives us the reason or basis for our living today? It is Only the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of the world who can give us the true purpose, hope, and meaning of life. It is knowing, as we commemorate the supernatural event where Christ who is the very God came in flesh, that He came to live a perfect, pure, holy life and die for His people on the cruel cross of Calvary only to rise again three days later, victorious from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-5). We are not to forget this historic event that changed the destiny of souls with a glorious hope.

This good news gave fallen and depraved man the only living hope, as He is our victor in life and death and can help us overcome our sinfulness and the curse of death. It is a glorious truth and fact that now, as the angels of old announced, there is peace and joy to the world as a result of the arrival of God in our midst (Luke 2:10,11).

Hank Hanegraff comments here,

"The term incarnation means "becoming in flesh." The doctrine of the incarnation certainly conveys scriptural truth. The Christian doctrine of the incarnation teaches that

the Eternal Word, the second person of the Trinity, without diminishing His deity took upon Himself a fully human nature. This doctrine implies that a full and undiminished divine nature as well as a full and perfect human nature were united in the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth. According to the Bible, Jesus Christ is God the Son, in human flesh. The Trinity: the other two members of the Trinity (Father and Holy Spirit) are only really understood and appreciated in light of the person and nature of Christ. Atonement: only Jesus Christ, who is the God-man, is able to reconcile a holy God with sinful humanity. Resurrection: a bodily resurrection which conquers death is only possible for the God-man. Justification: our state before God rests totally in our faith (personal trust) in the person and work of Jesus Christ.”

Conclusion

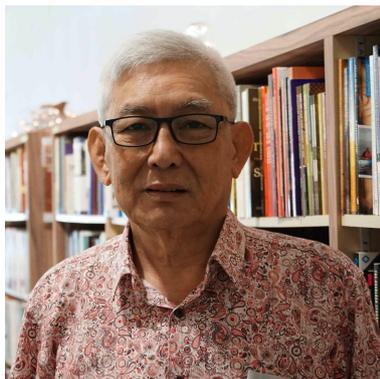
Do not miss the reason to hope in this sacred event. It is our fervent prayer that this Christmas will be a sobering and fruitful time of remembering Christ with grateful hearts for you and your family as you seek Him in God honouring worship and prayer, humbly and faithfully, and that salvation will come to some as they accept him as their God and Lord.

Our caring and gracious God has sent us His only begotten Son, Jesus into this sin filled world, opening a living way of eternal hope and salvation, as we cannot save ourselves (Tit 3:5). This is the greatest condescension, in that the Almighty God became flesh and lived among us. It is a great mystery unveiled, in that all repentant sinners can be redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect and those who truly believe and trust in Him will be saved forever. Will you entrust your soul to Him in genuine faith and repentance of sins today, before it is too late? Something to ponder on the wonder of Jesus this Christmas.

Jack Sin

Baptismal Candidates' testimony of Salvation

Anthony's Testimony



Before I came to the Lord, I was a free thinker, a worldly sinner who has heard the gospel but has no understanding of it. I came to SHBPC on the 16th of June 2019 through my children. Everyone at church was very welcoming and I like that it is a small but personable congregation. I feel comfortable and started coming to SHBPC every Sunday as a form of bonding with my daughter. After a few months' of attending the Sunday worship services and learning Lord's words through bible studies and the weekly catechism class, I started to gain better understanding of the Bible. I particularly like the teaching of the word by pastor. It is truly bible based and over time with fervent prayers from pastor and church members and most importantly by God's grace, I gradually learn the word of God . It was the 6th of Oct 2019 during the catechism class when pastor was sharing on the topic of salvation that I prayed to accept Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour. After coming to trust and believe in the Lord Jesus , I felt the peace of God over me. I am slowly but surely deepening my knowledge about God and his commandments. I understand the road ahead will be challenging but it gives me much joy to come every Sunday to celebrate Lord's day and worship and bond with Christ through His Scriptures. I desire to be more obedient and to serve Him the best I can in my remaining journey of this life.

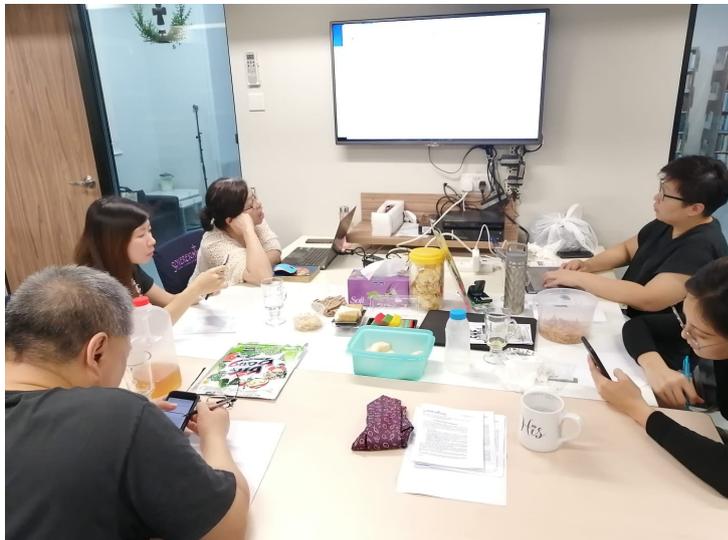
Cindy's Testimony

Christianity was first introduced to me when I was around 6 years old but it was not until high school that I started to explore the religion. I was in an Anglican school where I joined the Christian fellowship. We used to gather for morning prayers but to be honest I don't recall much learning from the Bible, except one thing - during prayers ,we practised in tongue. I tried but was not into it as I felt it an odd thing. Nonetheless, I was fervent in following the Lord. For two years, I prayed daily, I was a good student and I did well. Then puberty struck and I strayed onto other worldly pursuits. For most part of my adult life, I have forgotten about God but our Father has been gracious to me. In fact in hindsight, I thank God and the Holy Spirit for not forsaken me and reined me in when I strayed a little too off course.

God inspired me to return to Singapore last year and the relocation has been tough. Praise to God that through the ordeals, I am drawn closer to Him more than ever. Around April/May this year, I was attending another church and towards the end of the service, the pastor asked the congregation to close their eyes and invited those who wanted to receive Christ to raise their hands. I raised my hand. I do not recall what was shared specifically that day to cause that reaction. It was more of a gradual progression that led to the conviction to seek Christ as my Saviour . I was however still weak in my knowledge of Christ and was thirsty for His word. By God's sovereign hand, I was introduced to pastor Jack and SHBPC in June 2019. I visited the church on the 16th of June this year and found pastor's teaching of the Scriptures sound and genuine. I have been coming back ever since. The sermons and God's messages in the bible studies have cultivated my interest to learn more of God's word. Over the last 6 months of attending the different services organised by SHBPC, my love and understanding of our Heavenly Father has deepened over these 6 months . Some of my learnings this year are to practice patience, be still and wait upon the Lord, to learn to recognise and obey the Holy Spirit 's leading and trusting in the Lord's plan to prosper me and not harm me. 2019 has been quite a roller coaster year for me but I am pleased with how it turned out for me and I look forward to start a new chapter in 2020.



*Pray for the students who
attended the lecture on
Jude in MBBC in
Bangalore*



Pray for the website committee as they seek the Lord in the church website

Memory Verse

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angles, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory

Announcements

1. Rev Jack Sin speaks next Sunday on "Living Life to the Fullest". (1 Jn 5: 1 - 12)
2. Watchnight Service will be on 31 Dec at 8pm. Flyers are available at the counter for you to invite someone.
3. Prayer meeting continues on this Wed, Christmas Day, at 8pm in church.