

## The Joy of Christmas

By Santiago Lange



For many Christians around the world the Advent season is a time for spiritual reflection, evaluation and rejuvenation. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem 2000 years ago He came to a world that was steeped in fear and insecurity. The Jews were afraid of many things. A political despot, Herod the Great, ruled the land. A foreign occupation force, Rome's legions, had a firm grip on Judea. Many wars had broken out and the economy was uncertain. Jesus was indeed born into a darkened, weary and exhausted world. But in this seemingly hopeless environment an angel was sent of God to proclaim the best news the world had ever heard.

Every Christmas season we ought to remind each other that for us it is not enough for Christ to have been born physically. The Word assumed our fallen human nature for a reason. The Eternal Son came to open up the kingdom doors for us and the entire world. What really makes an eternal difference is Christ "being born in us". Our "Bethlehem" is when we apprehended Christ. It is that remarkable parallel that constitutes the good news of Christianity today, that Jesus can be born in us as certainly as He was born in Bethlehem. Therefore, to us, the announcing angel stands to make his welcome announcement: "Fear not. Fear not, for unto you is born this day a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

The words "fear not" appear in the Bible hundreds of times. Have we ever wondered why? Why did the angelic messenger of God say that we are not to fear? The reason was that a Savior was being presented, a Deliverer, a Rescuer, one who is adequate to free us from any threat and danger in any situation. That is why the shepherds were told not to be afraid. It did not make any difference what Herod or the Romans would do, or what the clever, manipulative minds of men would try to set in motion; there was a Deliverer, a Savior among them. A Redeemer had come who would change the situation and use it for His own glory and bring them through. Therefore the announcement of the angel was "be not afraid."

What the presence of Jesus in our lives ought to bring us, as Christians, is the absence of fear and the presence of joy. This is not intended to be a once-for-all experience. Many Christians understandably look back to the time of their conversion as a great moment or period of elation. We had a sense of deliverance, a sense of freedom, a sense of release. But experience is intended to be an ongoing process. We don't face dangerous and frightening situations just once or twice in a lifetime; we face them every day. Anytime something strikes terror in the heart or grips us with the cold hand of fear, anytime we are anxious and troubled and weary, anytime something seems to threaten us or our loved ones is a moment of danger. And for that moment, we have a Savior, a Deliverer. And as we look at Him, as we remind ourselves of who He is and what He came to do and what He can do, then we will discover again that same wonderful fulfillment of the angel's announcement. And there will break upon our hearts and faces a sense of continuing joy. Christmas is a time of cheer. And when our family

and friends are all gathered around us during this season, their presence will gladden our heart. But, our delight should not come just through circumstances. We welcome happy events. But, if we could see what our lives would be like without Jesus Christ for even one moment, we would never cease to praise God for every single blessing that comes into our lives. It all comes from His loving, gracious hands.

What if some of our loved ones were gone? Would the happiness remain? No matter what the trial may be, the promise of that announcing angel is that we have a Savior, a Deliverer. God did not promise that He would always take our problems away in this life, but He did say that He would lead us through every dark valley that may come in our path. Our Savior will strengthen us to face every situation and He will give us courage, peace and joy in the course of our journey. Therefore the promise of the angel remains "[Do not be afraid, for I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.](#)" (Luke 2:10-11)

This is what Christmas means, it is the Gospel message.

Hark! The Angels Sing.  
MERRY CHRISTMAS !!!