



REPENT AUSTRALIA

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

2 Chronicles 7:14

VOLUME 8:12

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GOOD NEWS

Once when the famous Lord Tennyson spent some time in a place in the country he asked an old woman if there was any news. She answered, “Why, Mr Tennyson, there’s only one piece of news that I know, and that is, Christ died for *all* men” To which the great poet replied, “That is old news and good news and new news.” On the other hand in this troubled world of ours today, day after day we are besieged with bad news. The media, be it electronic or print, constantly transmits a smorgasbord of war, disasters, crime, accidents, tragedies and hard luck stories. If its purpose is to alarm us it often succeeds. How different from the message a holy angel brought to a group of shepherds watching their sheep on a cold winter’s night in the countryside of Judea in Palestine 2000 years ago: *Be not afraid; for I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David (Bethlehem) a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.* Out of the darkness came the heavenly illumination. Whilst the earth was dark heaven glowed.

The Incarnation

The world was shrouded in the darkness of sin when Christ came and into the thickest of its inky blackness His light burst. Theologians call it the incarnation, meaning that God came in the flesh. In doing so God the Father committed to His Son two great works, of giving eternal life and ultimately executing judgment, that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. This amounts to saying that the Father directs everyone to do as the apostle “Doubting” Thomas did and acknowledge the Son in the same terms in which they ought to acknowledge the Father Himself – “my Lord and my God” When Jesus came into the world as a Babe He emptied Himself of all the glory He possessed in the ivory palaces of heaven. However, His deity was not reduced for in Him “all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily.” He did not simply clothe Himself in a human body but also took to Himself a human soul. He in fact became the God-man; though being God it was not in Him to yield to temptation yet being man it was necessary for Him to resist temptation in order to overcome it in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Fear Not

Observe the first word sent from heaven when Jesus Christ was born: *Be not afraid.* It was not a new message for again and again it had come – to Abraham, Isaac, Gideon, Daniel and Zechariah. These were the words which Jesus Himself made so familiar. He constantly told His disciples, *Fear not.* Moreover He has been saying those words ever since for He came to deliver the human race from its fears. His coming is God’s answer to gloom, despondency and pessimism. What are you afraid of? He asks. Am I not with you always? Are you afraid of your sins? Fear not! I am able to save to the uttermost. Are you afraid of the future? Fear not! I have overcome the world and the future lies in My hands. Are you afraid of death and bereavement? Fear not! I have conquered death. I died on the cross that you might live and have eternal life. Today the thing that separates us from Jesus Christ is a good deal of ignorance, confusion and deception that boils down to unbelief. Now we invite you to ask yourself the hard questions: Do you really know Jesus Christ, the Truth? Has He ever become your Saviour? Have you received His mercy to be saved from deception by the washing of regeneration and renewing your mind by the Holy Spirit? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

Great Joy

Then the angel added, *For behold I bring you good news.* Within this entire glorious episode was the love of God, so great and full for His creation as to send His Son to be born a helpless Babe, to suffer as a man

and to die on the cross for everyone of us. *News of great joy.* In no other religion is joy so conspicuous as in Christianity. For joy is the hallmark of the soul attaining its deepest desire of union with its Creator through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Both in the Old and New Testaments joy is consistently a characteristic of the individual and the Church. As a fruit of the Spirit it is not just an emotion; it is grounded in God Himself and anticipates the joy of being with Christ forever in the Kingdom of Heaven. How well the hymn writer Isaac Watts expressed it in the words of the well-known carol: *Joy to the world the Lord is come/ Let earth receive her King/ Let every heart prepare Him room/ And heaven and nature sing.*

Long Dark Ages

All that the angel said up to that point, however, was merely the preface to the message: *For to you is born a Saviour.* A Saviour! Then mankind is to be saved! Through the long, dark ages humanity has been captive to the tyrannical powers of sin, and nothing was more apparent than that it was unable to save itself. Now at last God, who of old had heard the cry of the Israelites under the taskmaster's whip in Egypt and sent them a saviour in Moses and subsequently delivered them again and again from their enemies, has decided to take on humanity's helpless cause. Christ the Saviour is born in Bethlehem, He grows up, He goes out into the world. He heals the sick, feeds the hungry, comforts the afflicted. Yet all the while one message comes through again and again: *Your sins are forgiven.* To the paralytic let down through the roof, to the thief on the cross, to those who crucified Him He offers forgiveness.

Wounded for Our Transgressions

There is born to us – Christ. He was born the Messiah (the Anointed One), the Chosen One of Israel, long prophesied by the prophets of old. He was the Wonderful Counsellor Isaiah foretold, who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. He was the prophesied Stem of Jesse, the Branch of Zechariah, the Messenger of the Covenant and the Sun of Righteousness. *There is born to you – the Lord.* See how steadily the angel's message climbs upward, as it were, from the cradle to the throne. The heavenly messenger begins with the birth and then rises step by step – the Saviour... Christ... to the climax – the Lord. The full impact and wonder of the first words are not felt until we come to the last. **The birth is the birth of the Lord.** It is not merely an emissary or a messenger or an angel – but the Lord Himself who has come to save mankind. For indeed God loved the world so much He gave His most precious possession – His beloved Son. No wonder the angels sang joyously that hymn of gladness for this was indeed *good news!*

The Lost Chord

Then suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, *Glory to God in the highest!* This is the lost chord in the Christmas anthem. But only as it is recovered throughout this nation and the world at large shall we be able to sing the other half of the angelic chorus: *And on earth peace, goodwill toward men.* Surely this is the heartfelt cry of people everywhere as war, strife and disharmony are raising their ugly heads in many lands across the globe. May this Christmas the beauty of Bethlehem bring this eternal message of hope to a world lacking hope and reveal to everyone of us the love of God so that we, like the shepherds, may lose ourselves in giving glory to God. As **you** bow on bended knee before the Babe of Bethlehem **Jesus Christ**, the coming King of kings and Lord of lords, may **you** too know the joy and peace that only He can give. May these words of the carol be on **your** lips and in **your** heart this Christmas: *Oh, come to my heart, Lord Jesus! There is room in my heart for Thee.*

PRAYER

Almighty God of infinite grace and mercy; the Great I AM; Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Light and Saviour of the world; Abba Father, we humbly come before Your throne of dominion and power to love, praise and worship You in spirit and in truth. We thank You, Holy Father, that in Your great eternal plan You did not overlook man's sin but dealt with it through Jesus Christ's shed blood on the cross of Calvary 2000 years ago. We thank You too that He conquered death and triumphed over spiritual wickedness in high places to set free from deception, to convict of sin and to draw us to Yourself. Blessed Holy Spirit, we pray for all members of families that are without the Saviour today and beseech You to draw them into Your family of faith. Reign in us, sovereign Lord we pray, that we continue to be faithful ambassadors of JESUS CHRIST the LORD. Spirit of the Living God, may the Gospel of Your saving grace reap an ever growing harvest of souls into Your Kingdom. In Jesus' majestic and triumphant Name we pray. Amen.

We wish you and your family a blessed and joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year 2004.

R.A. Lead by our Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to glorify God with the Brotherhood of Man in love and faithfulness to bring glory and honour to His Holy Name. Amen.

REJOICE & SHARE IN FAITH THIS MESSAGE IN PRAYER WITH OTHERS & BE BLESSED TO BE ONE IN CHRIST JESUS