CHRIST JESUS OF CHRISTMAS-REFLECTION

(By Weche Okubo)

Who was this Jesus Christ? (My reflections)

- He was born of a Carpenter father (Joseph) and a housewife mother (Mary). Ordinary parents and relatively of limited means (nothing special about them).
- His brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Jude/Judas and sisters whose names are not known (Matthew 13:52-57). These siblings did not even believe in Him till after his death.
- Born in a large family (four brothers and at least 2 sisters because the bible is silent but all the same it says He had sisters). In a family of at least 9 people Joseph had many mouths to feed. So Jesus may have experienced the hardships of a large and poor family. Many of us can identify with Him. No wonder he is known as “a man of sorrows”. What about their known relatives (Zechariah and Elizabeth) were they well to do?
- Born in Palestine the Roman territory and foreign rule
- Born in Bethlehem and lived in Nazareth hence Jesus of Nazareth. But when he began his ministry, he was rejected in Nazareth his hometown.
- When he taught, he taught with authority, wisdom and Power not like the Pharisees.
- The parents knew who he was. Did they reflect on what they knew about Him and share with anyone? These were special parents who waited on God himself to reveal the deity of his Son. Maybe these are some of the things we are told Mary the mother pondered upon in her lifetime till that wedding in Cana of Galilee when she revealed who He was. As a mother she loved Him unto his death on the cross.
- Were the prophecies by Anna and the Elder Simeon even believed by those who heard them?

Christmas.

Christmas is a commemoration of God's coming into the world. He came for all of us - believers and non-believers alike. His birth should bring us hope and triumph for our lives. But after years of celebrating Christmas after Christmas many of us
are yet to see that triumph in our lives. Our hopes may be giving way to despair especially during this season Covid-19. Many of us ask these questions:

- Has the Messiah really come?
- If He has where is He?
- Why doesn't He bring the triumph that removes the sadness, hardship of man?
- Then should we celebrate the birth of Christ?

Prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament

About seven hundred years before Christ, a prophecy concerning Jesus’ birth was recorded in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 7:14 says:

“The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel.”

Matthew 1:21, NLT: "And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

Daniel 7:13-14

Today we celebrate our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

The Prophet Daniel had a prophetic vision. In this vision, he saw the “Son of man,” which is a Messianic title that Jesus would later take upon Himself. He saw the Son of man who received “dominion, glory, and kingship.” Hence the title “King of kings”. This indicates that the Messiah or Christ (which literally means, “anointed one”) would be a great king. This indicates that the Messianic kingdom would go above and beyond the kingdom of Israel, which was a distinct nation with its own people and language. The new kingdom of the Son of man, although modeled after the Israelite kingdom of David, would supersede it. In the covenant God made with King David He promised him an everlasting kingdom. The fulfillment would ultimately come in Jesus, who is the descendant of David and the eternal King of the Universe.

Jesus is King of the Universe because He is God. Jesus has existed from all of eternity. He is the beginning and the end (expressed by “Alpha and Omega,” which
are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet). Jesus, as God, holds dominion over all of creation: \textit{Revelation 1:5-8}

\textbf{The Significance of the Birth of Jesus Christ}

\textit{Matthew 1:21-23(NIV)}

\textit{21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.”}

\textit{22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: \textit{23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”} (which means “God with us”).}

People all over the world have heard the story of Jesus’ birth. But have you ever wondered whether there’s more to the familiar story? Since the Bible records the birth of Jesus in detail, is there a deeper meaning to that event?

Though Jesus was born as a child with flesh and blood, His source was the Holy Spirit

\textbf{Jesus} and \textbf{Emmanuel} are two excellent names that are full of significance for us

\textit{“Jesus is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Joshua (Num. 13:16), which means Jehovah the Savior, or the salvation of Jehovah. Hence, Jesus is not only a man but Jehovah, and not only Jehovah but Jehovah becoming our salvation. Thus, He is our Savior. He is also our Joshua, the One who brings us into rest (Heb. 4:8; Matt. 11:28-29), which is Himself.”}

Because of the fall of man, all human beings need a Savior. This Savior is Jesus, who is Jehovah, the very God Himself. The God-man Jesus is the only one who saves us from our sins. We can enjoy His salvation whenever we call upon the name of Jesus. How precious the name of Jesus is! And these names have a deeper meaning to us:

\textit{“Jesus was the name given by God, whereas Emmanuel, meaning God with us, was the name by which man called Him. Jesus the Savior is God with us. He is God, and He is also God incarnated to dwell among us (John 1:14).}
“**Christ** as the very Emmanuel not only was with us when He was on earth, but also is with us, since His ascension and whenever we are gathered into His name (Matthew 18:20). Moreover, He will be with us all the days until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20).”

Our Savior Jesus is **Emmanuel**: He is *God with us* all the time. How comforting and encouraging this is! He’s always with us, everywhere and in every situation.

**What is Saving us and being with us forever mean?**

To save us, God did an amazing thing. The eternal God became an **approachable man** and lived a perfect, sinless life on earth among fallen humanity. What a mysterious and yet wondrous fact!

He reached mankind with His love, mercy, and kindness. He spoke words of righteousness and truth to bring people out of darkness and into light.

Then in His body of flesh and blood, Jesus suffered death on the cross for our sins.

He accomplished redemption for us, and by believing in Him, we’re cleansed from our sins and delivered from eternal judgment.

**APPLICATION**

Jesus is born but have we found Him yet?

The real problem today is that we are waiting for God to literally come to us. He already has come. We celebrate His birth just like that of any one of us - offering prayers, eating, drinking and making merry.

We celebrate his coming into the world but we do not welcome Him into our hearts and lives.

Yes, He has come into the world and is very much in our midst but unfortunately we refuse to recognize Him therefore fail to welcome Him.

By being born to ordinary parents, in an environment of poverty, honored with precious gifts and visitors from other nations (represented by visitors from the East), Jesus is telling us He came for all mankind - not only in places of majesty and glamor but among the poor and the down-trodden, the sick and dying, the hungry, the oppressed, the rich and in those we love and even in those we hate. He is also born
in the poor heart that seeks salvation and rest. In short He is among the people. He is here today among us.

Amidst our celebrations this Christmas, let us pause a while to look around us to recognize that Jesus who was born into the world two thousand years ago. He is among us in every person and in every trial and tribulation we encounter in our lives. Let us take a moment to look around to recognize Him in those who do not have joy and peace in their lives.

Let us do the little within our means to alleviate the pain and misery in their lives. Let us do whatever we can to give them the hope that triumph and will one-day wipe out the sadness in the hearts

We too, like Jesus, must have the humility to come down from our positions of comfort and power to meet Him in the people around us. If we isolate ourselves from the masses by building a fortress around us with all our wealth and power together with greed, selfishness and pride, then we can keep waiting for Jesus all our lives and we shall not meet Him-it will only be in vain.

The Jesus of Christmas;

He came to us and for us (John 1:1-18).

- Emmanuel came to His people but they did not recognize him. He made us in his image and to his likeness. He therefore not a stranger to us.
- He came for us to take us home with him that we may have life and have it in abundancy. He came for us that we may escape penalty of Sin-He accepted to die on our behalf. Death we deserved.
- He is coming to take us home and to reign in Holy Kingdom forever.

If you haven’t yet received the Savior, you don’t have to wait any longer. For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you. “I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation. (2Corinthians 6:2)

END

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