

## CHRISTMAS – A TIME TO REFLECT

Christmas is a wonderful time for most of us. It is a chance to break from the everyday struggles of life and experience the joy of being with loved ones. Unfortunately, we're often caught up by the attractions of nice things and lose sight of the simple beauty of the season. Most of us know that Christmas should mean more than presents and decorations. In making it a special time, we should look back over the year trying to see any experiences that can bring us closer to God. We should look at our relationship with others and thank God for new friendships and the continuation of old ones. It should be a sweet time of year because of all the good things associated with it. Let's take the opportunity to make it a celebration of God's love and generous plan for our future, trying to meditate on His promises and appreciating them in reverence and praise.

In studying some of these promises, we are often astounded at their far reaching impact on the world. When the angel proclaimed that the good tidings were to be to all people, he meant that every man, woman, and child who has ever lived would be blessed by the savior who was born in Bethlehem. The Apostle Paul tells us that "...as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Can you imagine the time when all the dead will be made alive? What a thrill to be reunited with family members and friends who were taken away by the grim reaper, death. When God promised "good tidings of great joy" He was promising to do much more than simply reunite families in the resurrection.

In the Bible, we read about an earthly kingdom that God will establish with the intention of making an eternal paradise for the willing and obedient of mankind. The promises of that kingdom are so exciting that they should inspire us to want to know more about them and about the one who made them. As we learn about the kingdom on earth, we begin to see the deeper meaning of "peace on earth and good will toward men." We begin to see into the character of God and the meaning of the scripture, "God is love." Please take a moment to think about the implications of one world government under the reign of Christ, directed by fair and just laws, motivated by love.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21:4

The time is coming when mankind will be reunited with God in fellowship--when God will wipe away our tears and sorrows and death will be no more.

The birth of Christ takes on so much more meaning when we expand our thoughts to include the results of what his death will bring—the resurrection of all mankind. What hope it inspires in us. What contentment it should bring to our lives when we realize that our future is bright, full of wonderful things, because God's promises are sure!

For your meditations, we invite you to send for the free booklet entitled, "The Kingdom of God." In it you will find a more thorough examination of the kingdom that Jesus taught us to pray for when he prayed, "...Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth

as it is in heaven...” May you have a blessed holiday season and, as you give and receive gifts, may you keep in mind the grand gifts that God has given us.