***CHRISTMAS MEETING***

Sing: Hymn 19:1,2

1. The people who in darkness walked have seen a glorious light,

now day has dawned for those who dwelt in deaths surrounding night.

To hail you, Sun of Righteousness, they with rejoicing come

as when with joy they share the spoil or bear the harvest home.

1. For you the burden have removed that on their shoulders lay,

have broken the oppressor's rod as once on Midian's day.

For boots by tramping soldiers worn and garments rolled in gore

the raging flames will all consume to mark the end of war.

Reading: Isaiah 9 : 6, 7

**6** For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**7** Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Sing: Hymn 16 : 1, 3

1. 0 come, 0 come, Emmanuel.

And ransom captive Israel

That mourns in lonely exile here,

Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel

Shall come to thee, 0 Israel.

1. 0 come, 0 come, Thou Lord of might Who to Thy tribes , on Sinai's height. In ancient times didst give the law In cloud and majesty and awe.

 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel

 Shall come to Thee 0 Israel.

Reading: Isaiah 11 : 1 - 10

1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

3 His delight is in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;

4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.

7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.



9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

10 "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."

 Sing: Hymn 20 : 1, 2

1. A great and mighty wonder,

upon the earth was done.

when Mary, virgin mother,

gave birth to God's own Son.

Repeat the song again:

"To God on high the glory,

and peace on earth to men!"

1. The Word became incarnate

made flesh, yet very God.

The angels hailed His coming,

with songs o’er fields abroad.

Repeat the song again:

 "To God on high the glory,

 and peace on earth to men!"

 Reading: Matthew 1:18 — 25

**18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

**19** Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

**20** But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

**21** And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

**22** So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:

**23** "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

**24** Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,

**25** and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

**Christmas Meditation**

The "Christmas-story" seems to appeal to many people. It is a birth-story, and is not a birth-story always very attractive and appealing, even to little children? However, the biblical nativity story must be appealing to us because of the very peculiar joy it would create according to the words spoken by the angel, when he said: "I bring you good news of great joy; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord."

It is not strange, therefore, that the books written by Luke, both his Gospel and the book of Acts, are full of joy. Remember the stories about Zechariah who would "have joy and gladness," that of Mary who rejoiced in God her Saviour, and of Elizabeth, Zacchaeus, and the Ethiopian eunuch who "went on his way rejoicing," and also of the people of Samaria who received the gospel with "much joy." Luke's books can be called a set of commentaries on the words spoken by the angel.

Of the greatest significance is what lies behind all this: It is really heart-moving to hear from the mouth of the Saviour Himself about the joy which is present in the heart of the heavenly Father whenever a prodigal son — or daughter, we may add -- returns to Him. The joy which the Father wants to

have about a sinner's plea for mercy, has made Him send down His own Son, in order that the gospel of His sufferings for our sins, and His victory over death, might be proclaimed to many who are lost in themselves.

It is encouraging, therefore, to learn from both books written by Luke that the good tidings of Christ's atoning death and resurrection have indeed filled many hearts with joy.

Once again at this time of the year, we too, hear the same gospel, the good tidings of the birth of the God-given Saviour. Therefore we, too, have every reason to be moved by the joy which is there in the heart of the heavenly Father, and to rejoice with exceedingly great joy!

Sing Hymn 23: 1, 2, 5, 6

Let us of Christ our Lord and Saviour sing,

for, though God's equal, though eternal King,

He did not to His rightful glory cling.

Hallelujah, hallelujah!

Himself He emptied that He us might save;

himself for us, God's chosen ones, He gave

and, born as man, our Lord became a slave.

Hallelujah, hallelujah!

Let at the name of Jesus every knee,

from heav'n above to depths below the sea,

Now humbly bow before His majesty.

Hallelujah, hallelujah!

Let every tongue confess that Christ is King,

for He is Lord of all created things.

So to the praise of God the Father sing:

Hallelujah, hallelujah!

**Meditation: "Jesus is coming!"**

The big event in the month of December is Christmas, the date on which people traditionally remember that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a small town five miles south of Jerusalem. But there are really two comings of the Lord. The first one is remembered at Christmas. The second one is "near", the Bible assures us. If you are happy that Jesus came the first time, you should be overjoyed to know that He is coming again. Christians cannot think of Christ's first coming, as a baby, without making ready for His coming as Lord.

You might say that there is only one message in the Bible: Jesus is coming! In the Old Testament times people did not say that they were waiting for Jesus. They did not yet know His name. They were expecting a Saviour whom they called Son of David or Messiah. They looked for the day when God would set things straight in the world. At any rate, they were always looking forward, expecting the coming.

The New Testament brings us Christ and all His benefits. Here we also learn that the complete revelation of God's Kingdom involves two comings of Jesus — His coming with grace and His return in glory. Therefore the message has not changed: Jesus is coming! And the people of the new covenant live just the way the people of the old covenant lived — always looking forward, always expecting the coming.

There is one Bible message — the coming of Jesus! And there must be one response — readiness and faith!

In the midst of all the preparations for Christmas this month, the big question may not be suppressed: when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on this earth?

We must live this month with gladness and soberness. We may enjoy what we receive- as long as we look forward to what is coming!

Sing Hymn 67 : 1, 6, 7

1. "Come, Lord Jesus! Maranatha!" pray the Spirit and the Bride. Come upon the clouds of heaven With your angels at your side. Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus! Evermore with us abide.

1. Then let your refining Spirit

us with flaming zeal endue.

May we wait with eager longing

for your promise to come true

When you, Lord, with fire from heaven All creation will renew.

1. No one knows the day or moment when the Bridegroom shall appear. Let us then be ever watchful;

may our lamps be bright and clear. Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus

Your great Day is drawing near!

Reading Revelation 21 : 1 - 8

**1** Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

**2** Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

**3** And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

**4** And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

**5** Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

**6** And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

**7** He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

**8** But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Meditation: "The New Country."

The great renovation is under way. To us it seems to take very long. But we must not forget that the reasons why it takes so long lie in God's wisdom and grace.

The beginnings of God's renewal of the world are despised by most, but they are greeted as the first signs of spring by all who have ears to hear and eyes to see. Just as God created by His Word, so He makes a new world by the gospel of His Son. The sower has gone forth.

To us it seems impossible that the world could be entirely changed, for we are unable to change people. We cannot even change ourselves. But what is impossible with us is possible with God. In the beginning He gave us one father, Adam, whose blood flows in all of us. Now he has given us a second Adam, the Lord Jesus, whose Spirit flows in all who believe in Him. Already we have received a new heart, a new hope and new power. We trust God to finish His work and make all things new.

We must never be discouraged. Nothing is so bad that God cannot make it good. Nothing is so bad that He cannot make it new. God did reveal to us that he has to use fire. The kingdom comes with judgment and salvation. Already the judgment came into the world. Good Friday was judgment day.

On Golgotha the wrath of God was poured out on all our sins. Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For them the old things have passed away. Those who are in Christ have had their sins punished. God will not punish us twice.

We have now been brought into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son. Under His rule we live a new life. Soon it will be revealed that God has given us a new name and new country — the land of hope and glory.

Singing Hymn 73 : 1, 2, 4

1. Lo, what a glorious sight appeared

before admiring eyes:

the former seas had passed away, the former earth and skies.

 From heav'n the new Jerus’lem came,

for Christ as Bride prepared.

A voice resounding from the throne these wondrous things declared:

2."Now God in glory down to men

has moved His blest abode.

He dwells with them; his people they, and He his people's God.

His gracious hand shall wipe the tears from every weeping eye,

for pain and grief shall be no more, and death itself shall die."

4."Come, all who thirst! To you I will my healing waters give.

Drink from My fountain without price and so forever live.

Blest is the man who, conquering, his heritage has won,

for I will be his faithful God,

and he shall be my son.