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DIE GEES VAN KERSFEES



KERSFEES, Goeie Vrydag, Hemelvaart en Pinksterfees is groot kerklike feesdae; elkeen met sy eie karakter en boodskap aan die mens. Van hierdie feeste is Kersfees seker die gewildste.

Oud en jonk sien uit na Kersfees. Die siekes verwag op dié dag iets besonders. Dit is asof daar nuwe hoop in hulle harte opvlam. Die oues van dae moet onthou en gelukkig gemaak word. Baie probeer om op hierdie dag geluk rondom hulle te saai.

In baie harte word nuwe voornemens gekoester, maar as Kersfees werklik vir ons iets beteken, behoort ons die hele jaar deur die Kersfeesgees uit te leef. Dit sal ons slegs kan doen as ons in die gees neerkniel voor die Kindjie van Betlehem en Hom die goud, wierook en mirre van ons hart en lewe gee; as ons Hom erken en huldig, nie alleen as die Koning van die Jode nie, maar ook as ons Koning. Wat is die gees van Kersfees?

DIT IS 'N GEES VAN LOF

Die liedere van Sagaria, Maria, Elisabet en Simeon was almal *lofliedere*. Ook die engelelied was een van *lof* en eer aan God. Ook ons lewens moet meer van 'n *loflied* wees as ons dink aan alles wat God aan ons deur sy Seun gegee het!

DIT IS 'N GEES VAN BLYDSKAP

Die engele het gesê: "Kyk, ons bring julle 'n goeie tyding van groot blydskap wat vir die hele volk sal wees..." Christus het gesê dat Sy blydskap in ons volkomme moet word. Ons moet Kersfees vier met vreugde en blydskap, omdat daar vir ons persoonlik 'n Saligmaker gebore is. Ons het geen reg om ons te verbly oor Kersfees as ons nie die geestelike betekenis daarvan aanvaar en Jesus aanneem as ons Verlosser nie!

DIT IS 'N GEES VAN HULDE EN AANBIDDING

Die skaapherders uit die velde van Betlehem, die wyse manne uit die Ooste, die heiliges, het aan Jesus hulde gebring en Hom aanbid. En ons? Is daar nie dalk by ons 'n gees van ligsinnige pret en plesier op Kersdag nie? En as ons bid, VRA ons nie maar net nie? Daar is 'n groot verskil tussen bid en aanbid. Daar moet by ons wees 'n gees van hulde en aanbidding in heilige eerbied en dit kan ons alleen besit as ons Hom liefhet: as ons Hom ken as Immanuel - God met ons.

DIT IS 'N GEES VAN GEE

God het met Kersfees aan ons Sy beste, Sy Eniggebore Seun gegee, en ons gee ook met Kerstdag geskenke aan mekaar. Maar gee ons aan God? Wat gee ons aan Hom? Gee ons ons beste? Ons lewens? Laat ons 'n gees van gee uitleef! Die gee van ons beste, onself, ons talente, ons tyd, ons gawes, ons diens en ons liefde, omdat ons God se onuitspreeklike Gawe ontvang het!

DIT IS 'N GEES VAN VREDE

Hy is die Vredelopers. Die engele sing: "Vrede op aarde." Laat ons vrede leef en vrede saai. Wees op u hoede; moet nooit kwaad, rusie, twis of agterdog saai met u woorde nie. Hy, die Vredelopers, sê Self: "Salig is die vredemakers, want hulle sal God sien."

DIT IS 'N GEES VAN LIEFDE

"Want so lief het God die wêreld gehad..." God het die mens só liefgehad. God het Sy liefde bewys deur Sy Seun te gee. Christus het Sy liefde bewys deur Homself, Sy lewe, te gee. Hoe bewys ons ons liefde?

Christus het gesê, "Dit is My gebod dat julle mekaar moet liefhe. Dit gebied Ek julle, dat julle mekaar moet liefhe. Hieraan sal die wêreld weet dat julle My kinders is, as julle liefde het onder mekaar." Hoe is dit met die bewys van ons liefde gesteld? Die toets van ons liefde vir Christus lê daarin of ons Sy gebod gehoorsaam en liefde onder mekaar het!

-Oorgeneem

The Star in God's Window

One night, a man and his small son were walking slowly down the streets of a large American city. The child was delighted to see the many service stars hanging in the windows of homes - each star proudly proclaiming the fact that a son was in the service of his country. He clapped his hands excitedly as he approached each new star and was duly impressed by those homes with more than one star in the window.

Finally they came to a wide gap between houses, through which the black velvet of the sky was clearly discernible, with the evening star shining brightly. "Oh look, Daddy" cried the little boy, "God must have given His Son, for He has a star in His window!"

-Harry Lauder



Fébé

"Ek beveel by julle aan ons suster Fébé, wat 'n dienares is van die gemeente in Kenchréë, dat julle haar ontvang in die Here, soos dit die heiliges betaam, en haar bystaan in elke saak waarin sy julle nodig mag hê. Want sy was vir baie 'n beskermster en ook vir my" (Romeine 16:1-2).

Die naam Fébé in Grieks beteken **rein, stralend, helder**. Die naam word afgelei vanuit die Griekse mitologie, en dit was ook die naam van 'n Griekse god.

Paulus het egter nie haar naam verander nie, maar 'n Christelike inhoud daaraan gegee. Nadat sy haar lewe aan Jesus Christus oorgegee het, was sy waar sy ook al beweeg het, 'n rein, helder, stralende gelowige en het vir Christus Jesus geskyn!

Die woord "**dienares**" kom van die Griekse woord **diakonos** wat deurgaans in die Nuwe Testament vertaal word met "**diaken**" of "**dienaar**". Die begrip sny egter ver wyer as om bloot net te verwys na die diakens wat in die eerste gemeente aan arm gelo-

wiges voedsel uitgedeel het. Die woord kan manlik of vroulik wees - **dienaar** of **dienares**.

'n Dienaar of dienares kon menigvuldige funksies vervul as helpers in die Kerk of in 'n gemeente. Hulle kon omsien na siekes, armes, martelare versorg, mense in die gevangenis besoek en kinders in die Sondagskool leer. Hulle kon ook mense bystaan by doopgeleenthede, sorg vir die nagmaaltafel, bid vir mense wat in nood verkeer het, en ook menige ander pligte in die gemeente vervul het. **Hulle was dienaars!**

Paulus kon selfs hierdie getroue dienares gebruik om sy belangrike Sendbrief na die gemeente in Rome te neem. Sy moes in Korinte op 'n seilskip klim, wat eintlik baie gevaelik was, en oorvaar na Rome om hierdie belangrike missie te voltooi. Onthou, Paulus was ten tye van hierdie geleentheid nog nie self in Rome nie, maar hy skryf aan die gemeente daar dat hy 'n besoek aan hulle sou bring. Sy sou sy Sendbrief aan hulle neem en gemeentenuus na hom terugbring.

Haar reis was van Kenchréë aan die ooskus van Korinte, ongeveer 10 tot 12 kilometer ver oor die see na Rome, die wêreld se hoofstad. Dit was by alles 'n gevaelige tussenheid tussen heidense afgode. Dus baie gevaelik vir 'n enkele vrou. Renan skryf só hieroor: "Phoebe carried under the folds of her robe the whole future of Christian theology." En Vincent skryf: "Paul sent the letter (no carbon copy) with this woman over the long and dangerous journey to Rome. God's watchful care was over both the bearer and the letter."

Fébé was waarlik 'n **diakonos** - 'n **dienares**. 'n Vertroueling. Sy was 'n getroue dienares van die gemeente in Kenchréë. Treffend was ook die feit dat sy 'n welvarende vrou was. Dit kan afgelei word uit haar beskrywing in die Skrif. Met haar invloedryke posisie en al haar middele het sy huis die gemeente se vooruitgang asook die uitbreiding van die Evangelie gedien. Haar invloedryke posisie en finansiële middele het haar nie hoogmoedig of onbetrokke gemaak nie, maar huis **diensbaar**. Daarom het sy Paulus

ook finansiële ondersteun.

Interessanter is dat ons kennis neem dat Paulus self ook 'n "**dienaar**" genoem is. So ook van die ander gemeenteledere. Selfs Jesus Christus is 'n "**Dienaar**" genoem. En so behoort elke gelowige, ook ek en jy, 'n **dienaar** te wees in die Kerk van Jesus Christus.

Jesus Christus sê ons is die sout van die aarde, maar as die sout laf geword het, waarmee sal dit gesout word? Dit deug nêrens meer as om buite gegooi te word en deur die mense vertrap te word nie. Het jou en my optrede as **Christendienares** dalk al laf geword?

Jesus sê vir ons in Matt. 5:14 "Julle is die lig van die wêreld." In die eerste plek is Hy die LIG van die wêreld. Maar Hy noem Sy "**dienares**" - elke volgeling van Hom ook "...die lig van die wêreld". Hoe helder skyn ons as "**dienares**" van Hom se lig in 'n al donker wordende wêreld?

© Dr. JJ Venter

Vandag
sal ek opstaan
en na my Vader
gaan
dat Hy my kan beklee
met 'n nuwe kleed
van vrymoedigheid
en ywer
en liefde...

Ek sal die peule
van selfbejammering
en neerlaag
van ingekeerdheid
en onbetrokkenheid
wegwerp
want my tranesaad
het vermenigvuldig
tot 'n ongekende oes
van Goddelike vreugde...

En Sy liefde
sal soos 'n rein tulband
my hoof oordek
my liggaam drapeer
en my voete gewillig maak
om Sy verlossingswerk
te proklameer...
© Huegene Venter

Van Krip tot Kruis tot Koningskap

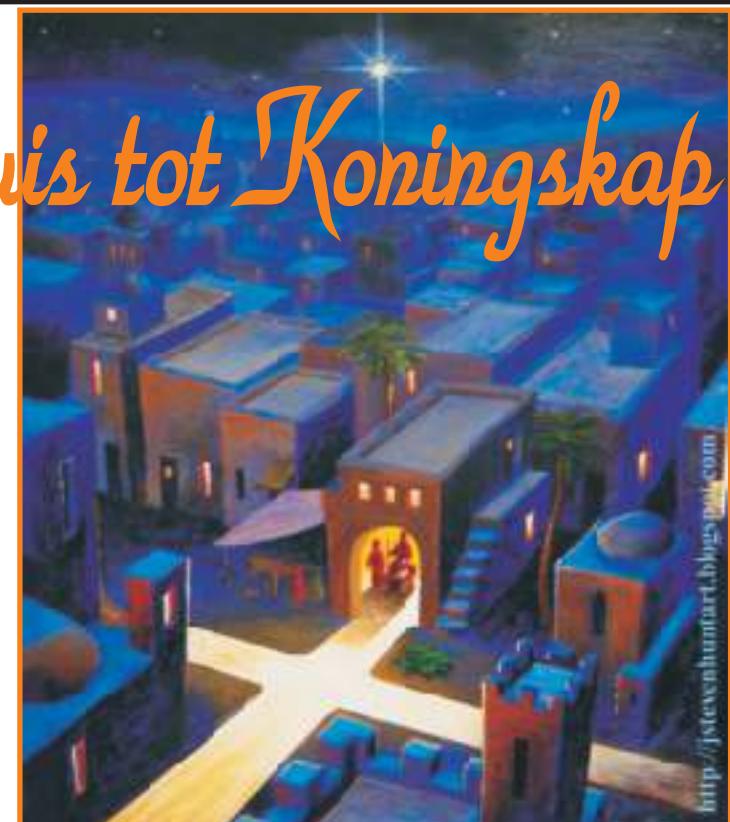
Jesus het as 'n gewone baba in die wêreld gekom. Hy is in 'n stal gebore en Sy wiegie was 'n krip. Hy was, net soos enige ander mens, onderworpe aan die gang van tyd en moes, net soos alle ander kinders, na Sy ouers luister.

Hy het in die Romeinse provinsie Judea grootgeword, en Sy Hande het hard en sterk geword in skrynwerker Josef se winkel. As mens het Hy van plek tot plek geloop, mense aangeraak en met skares gepraat.

Hy het twaalf dissipels opgelei om Sy werk later voort te sit. Op elke tree van Sy lewenspad is Hy gekonfronteer deur misverstand en mense wat Hom wou verhinder om met Sy Vader se werk voort te gaan; mense wat Sy invloed vir altyd wou uitwis.

Uiteindelik het hulle so ver gegaan om Hom vanuit Joodse godsdiestige hoek valslik van misdrywe te beskuldig. Hy is verhoor en ter dood veroordeel; Hy is soos 'n gewone misdaadiger deur Romeinse soldate tereggestel. So het Hy dan ook gesterf, nadat Hy mishandel is. Ja, Jesus, wat volkome God én volkome mens was, het Sy lewe gegee sodat die mens kan lewe.

Op die tyd wat God daarvoor bestem het, sal die



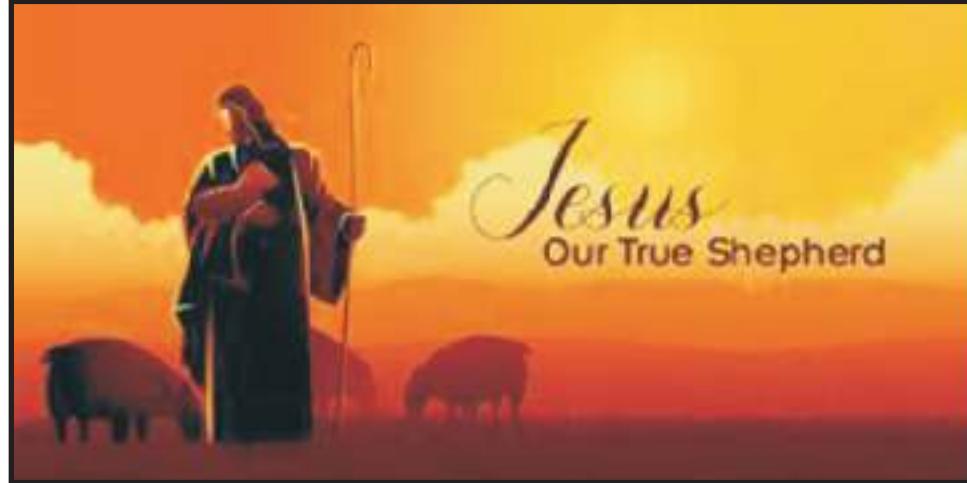
opgestane Jesus terugkeer na die aarde. Dan sal almal weet en erken dat Hy Here van die heelal is!

Almal wat Hom liefhet, sal juig! Hulle sal die Verlosser met sang en lofprysing begroet. Sy vyande sal egter van vrees bewe. Hulle sal, onder die vaandel van die Bose, teen Christus en Sy leërs optrek - maar hulle sal gou uit vind dat niemand teen die oordeel van God staande kan bly nie. Christus sal die veldslag final wen en vir ewig as die erkende Oorwinnaar heers! Jesus, die nederige diensknege wat soveel moes ly, is ook die verheerlike Koning en Regter!

[Die Bybel in Praktyk, CUM, 1993].

BOETELEDIPELE - GO NNA MODISA JAAKA JESU

(Leadership - To be a Shepherd like Jesus)



TEMANA

"Ke nna modisa yo o molemo; modisa yo o molemo o beela dinku bophelo jwa gagwe" (JOHANE 10:11).

MOKGWA WA MODISA, NGK KEVIN LEMAN le WILLIAM PENTAK - <https://oiipdf.com/the-way-of-the-shepherd> Translated in Setswana:

- 1. Itse boemo jwa letsomane la gago.
- a. Tlhokomela kemo ya batho ba gago le kemo ya tiro ya bone.
- b. Itse letsomane la gago, nku e nngwe le e nngwe ka nako.
- c. Buisana le batho ba gago ka gale, ka tlhomamo.
- d. Nna o butse matlho le ditsebe, botsa dipotso mme dira go tsamaisana le seo.
- 2. Ribolola sebolepego sa dinku tsa gago.
- a. Dinku tse o di tlhophang go nna karolo ya letsomane go ka tokafatsa talobolaodi jwa gago go nna botoka kgotsa thata go feta.
- b. Simolola ka dinku tse di itekanetseng, fa o sa dire jalo o amogela mathata a motho yo mongwe.
- c. Itse SEBOPEGO / SHAPE sa dinku tsa gago mme tlhomamisa gore di siame.
- i. S Strength, / Maatla - Dira mme dirisa ka go lebelala maatla a a leng teng.
- ii. H Heart, / Pelo - pelo ya gago e bontsha PHISEGO ya gago.
- iii. A: Attitude, / Boitshwaro - nna le boitshwaro jwa morutwana, dula o le posetifi, mowa wa gore re ka kgon, motshameki wa setlhophha.
- iv. P: Personality, / Seriti - bayabatho mo maemong a a tsamaisanang mme a a bontshang seriti sa bone.
- v. E: Experiences, / Maitemogelo - dirisa maitemogelo le kumo ya maitemogelo a bone.
- 3. Thusa dinku tsa gago gore di lemoge gore o mang mme o batla eng.
- a. Aga tshepo mo balateding ba gago ka go aga botshepegi, tshiamo le bopelotele.
- b. Baya maemo a a leng kwa godimo a tiro le tiragatso.
- c. Thaeletsana tlhokego ya gago le toro ya gago ya dingwaelo le temogo ya maike misetso a gago gantsi le ka tlhamalalo.
- d. Thalosetsa tsela le tiro ya batho ba gago mme o ba itsise sentle gore ba tlhokega kae.
- e. Gakologela thata gore boeteledipele ga se fela boithutelo mme ke tirisanommogo ya sebele.
- 4. Tshokomela gore mafulu a lona e bolokesegile.
- a. Tlhokomela gore batho ba gago nako yotlhe ba itse tshedimosetso yotlhe.
- b. Agelela kitso ya gore tiro e nngwe le e nngwe e botlhokwa mme e na le mosola.
- c. Dinku tse di tlisang mathata nako yotlhe o tshwanetse go di ntsha mo letsomaneng.
- d. Dikolosa dinku ka metla go ya kwa mafulong a matalana.
- e. Thomamisetsa dinku tsa gago gore o teng mme ba bolokesegile.
- f. Se lettelele mathata gore a nne le nako ya go gola.
- 5. Thobane ya kgweetsa le go kaela tsela.
- a. Itse kwa o jang teng, ya kwa pele mme dira gore letsomane le dule le etelela pele.



HE ENTERED THE WORLD... AND WILL SOON RETURN!

With tiny wrinkles and cries, He entered the world and, wrapped in strips of cloth, took His first nap on a bed of straw. Subject to time and to parents, He grew to manhood in Roman-occupied Judea, His gentle hands becoming strong and calloused in Joseph's woodworking shop.

As a man, He walked through the countryside and city, touching individuals, preaching to crowds, and training 12 men to carry on His work. At every step He was hounded by those seeking to rid the world of His influence.

Finally, falsely accused and tried, He was condemned to a disgraceful execution by foreign hands. And He died - spat upon, cursed, pierced by nails, and hung heavenward for all to deride, **JESUS, the God-man, gave His life completely so that all might live!**

At God's appointed time, the risen and ascended **LORD JESUS** will burst onto the world scene. Then everyone will know that **JESUS** is **LORD** of the Universe! Those who

love Him will rejoice, greeting their Saviour with hearts overflowing with songs of praise! But His enemies will be filled with fear. Allied with Satan, the enemies of Christ will marshal their legions against Christ and His armies. But who can withstand God's wrath? Christ will win the battle and reign victorious forever! **JESUS**, the humble suffering Servant, is also the powerful, conquering King and Judge!

Revelation is a Book of Hope. John, the beloved apostle and eyewitness of Jesus, proclaimed that the victorious Lord would surely return to vindicate the righteous and judge the wicked. But *Revelation* is also a Book of Warning. Things were not as they should have been in the churches, so Christ called the members to commit themselves to live in righteousness.

Although **JESUS** gave this revelation of Himself to John more than 2 000 years ago, it still stands as a comfort and challenge to God's people today. We can take heart as we understand John's vision of hope. **Christ will return to rescue His people and settle**



accounts with all who defy Him.

John begins this Book by explaining how he received this revelation from God. He then records specific messages from **JESUS** to the seven churches in Asia.

Suddenly, the scene shifts as a mosaic of dramatic and majestic images bursts into view before John's eyes. This series of visions portrays the future rise of evil, culminating in the Antichrist.

Then follows John's recounting of the triumph of the King over all kings, the wedding of the Lamb, the final judgment, and the coming of the New Jerusalem. **Revelation con-**

cludes with the promise of Christ's soon return, and John breathes a prayer that has been echoed by Christians through the centuries: "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20).

As you read the Book of *Revelation*, marvel with John at the wondrous panorama of God's revealed plan. Listen as Christ warns the churches, and root out any sin that blocks your relationship with Him. Be full of hope, knowing that God is in control, Christ's victory is assured, and all who trust in Him will be saved!

[*Life Application Study Bible, New Living Translation, Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois, 2007*.]



*O Heer,
Aan die einde van nog 'n jaar -
vir sommige gesaai met pyn
en verlies, vir ander bestrooi
met vreugdenote en warmte,
meer waarskynlik 'n bittersoet
mengsel...*

*Aan die einde bly daar
net een woord voor:
'Dankie!'
Dankie vir wat ek het,
vir wie ek het,
vir wie ek is,
en vir die hoopvolle toekoms
wat ek tegemoetgaan!*

*Dankie, O onveranderlike Heer,
vir U voetstap langs myne
deur die duine van my
woestynlewe...
Die grosheid het my geskaaf,
en sagtheid het my gepoets,
en nou bly een begeerte:
om opnuut en steeds helderder
U Beeld te weerkaats!
(c) C Venter*

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A Christmas Story

Bobby was getting cold sitting in his backyard in the snow. Bobby didn't wear boots; he didn't like them and anyway, he didn't own any. The thin sneakers he wore had a few holes in them and they did a poor job of keeping out the cold.

Bobby had been in his backyard for about an hour already. And, try as he might, he could not come up with an idea for his mother's Christmas gift. He shook his head as he thought, "This is useless, even if I do come up with an idea, I don't have any money to spend."

Ever since his father had passed away three years ago, the family of five had struggled. It wasn't because his mother didn't care, or try, there just never seemed to be enough. She worked nights at the hospital, but the small wage that she was earning could only be stretched so far.

What the family lacked in money and material things, they more than made up for in love and family unity. Bobby had two older and one younger sister, who ran the household in their mother's absence. All three of his sisters had already made beautiful gifts for their mother. Somehow it just wasn't fair. Here it was Christmas Eve already, and he had nothing to give her. Wiping a tear from his eye, Bobby kicked the snow and started to walk down to the street where the shops were. (It wasn't easy being six without a father, especially when he needed a man to talk to).

Bobby walked from shop to shop, looking into each decorated window. Everything seemed so beautiful and so out of reach. It was starting to get dark and Bobby reluctantly turned to walk

home when suddenly his eyes caught the glimmer of the setting sun's rays reflecting off something along the curb. He reached down and discovered a shiny dime. Never before has anyone felt so wealthy as Bobby felt at that moment!

As he held his newly-found treasure, a warmth spread throughout his entire body and he walked into the first store he saw. His excitement quickly turned cold when salesperson after salesperson told him that he could not buy anything with only a dime.

Finally he saw a florist and went inside to wait in line. When the shop owner asked if he could help him, Bobby presented the dime and asked if he could buy one flower for his mother as a Christmas gift. The shop owner looked at Bobby and his ten cent offering. Then he put his hand on Bobby's shoulder and said, "You just wait here and I'll see what I can do for you."

As Bobby waited, he looked at the beautiful flowers and even though he was a boy, he could see why mothers and girls liked flowers. The sound of the door closing as the last customer left, jolted Bobby back to reality. All alone in the shop, Bobby began to feel forlorn and afraid.

Suddenly the shop owner came out and moved to the counter. There, before Bobby's eyes, lay twelve long-stem, red roses, with leaves of green and tiny white flowers all tied together with a big silver bow.

Bobby's heart sank as the owner picked them up and placed them gently into a long white box. "That



will be ten cents young man," the shop owner said reaching out his hand for the dime. Slowly, Bobby moved his hand to give the man his dime. Could this be true? No one else would give him a thing for his dime! Sensing the boy's reluctance, the shop owner added, "I just happened to have roses on sale for ten cents a dozen. Would you like them?"

This time Bobby did not hesitate, and when the man placed the long box into his hands, he knew it was true. Walking out the door, he heard the shopkeeper say, "Merry Christmas, son."

In the meantime, the shopkeeper's wife had come to the front and asked, "Who were you talking to back there and where are the roses you were fixing?"

Staring out the window, and blinking the tears from his eyes, he replied, "A strange thing happened to me this morning. While I was setting up things to open the shop, I thought I heard a voice telling me to set aside a

dozen of my best roses for a special gift.

"I wasn't sure at the time whether I had lost my mind or what, but I set them aside anyway. Just a few minutes ago, a little boy came into the shop and wanted to buy a flower for his mother with one small dime.

"When I looked at him, I saw myself, many years ago. I too was a poor boy with nothing to buy my mother a Christmas gift. A bearded man, whom I never knew, stopped me in the street and told me that he wanted to give me ten dollars.

"When I saw that little boy tonight, I knew Whose Voice that was, and I put together a dozen of my very best roses."

The shop owner and his wife hugged each other tightly, and as they stepped out into the bitter cold air, they somehow didn't feel cold at all!

<http://www.all-creatures.org/stories/xmasstory.html>

STAP SAAM MET GOD...

"Loof die Here, want Hy is goed, aan Sy liefde is daar geen einde nie!"(Psalm 106:1)

"Ek weet aan Wie ek my toevertrou het,
al wissel dan ook dag en nag;
Ek ken die Rots
op Wie ek gebou het,
van Wie ek al my heil verwag.
Eens aan die einde van my lewe,
sal ek, van alle sorge vry,
vir elke dag my hier gegewe
U 'n hoër, reiner loflied wy."
(Gesang 353:4)

Met hierdie gesang kan 'n mens die ou jaar uitstap en die nuwe jaar betree. Méér nog, 'n mens kan daarmee na jou sterfbed gaan en

die Ewigheid aandurf. Hier, in die laaste oomblikke van die jaar, roep ons die hele pad waarlangs God ons gelei het in herinnering. Ons dank Hom vir elke tree van die pelgrimsreis, omdat Hy ons deur elke dag liefgehad en gedra het.

Daar is baie waarvoor ons om vergifnis moet vra: kosbare tyd wat ons verkwis het, liefde wat ons weerhou het, gebede wat ons nie gebid het nie, geleenthede wat ons laat verbygaan het.

Daar is so oneindig baie waarvoor ons God kan dank: vir bewaring, genesing, ondersteuning, voorstiening. Mag ons geïnspireer



word deur die woorde van Marie-Louise Haskins:

"Ek het aan die Man by die poort 'n lig gevra vir die donker pad wat voorlê."

Hy het vir my gesê: 'Plaas jou

swak hand in die Hand van die almagtige God en stap moedig voort. Dit sal vir jou beter wees as 'n lig en veiliger as 'n bekende pad.'"

- Oorgeneem

Dirk se Geskenk

"Tien, twintig, dertig, veertig, vyftig! Nou het ek nog vyftig rand om in my spaarrekening te deponeer!" het Dirk opgewonde gedink. "Ek sal nog voor Kersfees my fiets kan koop."

Dirk was trots daarop dat hy elke sent van die geld wat hy gespaar het, self verdien het. Tant Bettie, hulle buurvrou, was altyd bly om sy hulp in die tuin te hê, en oom Koos de Beer het hom dikwels gevra om sy motor te was. Tant Bettie het gespog met haar netjiese tuin en oom Koos was net so trots op sy blink motor. Albei het hom goed vir sy werk betaal.

Vinnig het hy na die sitkamer gestap. Hy moet sy ma die goeie nuus vertel. By die deur het hy egter vasgesteek. 'n Vrou was besig om met sy ma te praat. Hy het nie bedoel om af te luister nie, maar hy kon nie help om te hoor waaroer hulle praat nie. Die dame het onder tranen vertel dat haar man in die hospitaal is, dat hulle feitlik niks in die huis het om te eet nie, en dat hulle nie Kersfees sal

kan vier nie.

"Ek is bevrees dat ek nie vir jou veel kan gee nie," het hy sy ma hoor sê. "Hier is 'n klein bydrae. Ons moet ook nou besuinig, want my man het vanjaar afgetree. Ek sal egter vir jou bid, want ek weet die Heer kan onderneem."

Dirk het gou na sy kamer gestap. Hy het mev. Wessels goed geken. Dit was sy wat nie wou toelaat dat haar seun, Jannie, saam met hom Bybelstudie bywoon nie. "Hulle sit heeldag op die skoolbanke," het sy gesê. "Ek kan nie insien waarom hulle in die aande ook nog moet 'studeer' nie."

Dirk was nog besig om daaroor na te dink toe 'n gedagte skielik by hom opkom. Wat van die geld in sy spaarrekening? Maar dis mos onsin! Hy het dan só hard gewerk om geld bymekaar te maak vir sy droomfiets! Nou was dit binne sy bereik...

Daardie aand was hy besonder stil aan tafel. Later toe hy op sy knieë was, kon hy nie bid nie. Die

woorde, "Gee, en aan julle sal gegee word," het aanhoudend deursy gedagtes gemaal. Eenkeer het Dominee in die kerk gesê dat as 'n gedagte na jou kom en jy nie seker is of dit reg is nie, toets dit aan die Woord van God. Bid daaroor. As dit van God is, sal die begeerte al sterker word. So nie, sal jy daarvan vergeet.

Toe Dirk die volgendeoggend wakker word, het hy geweet wat hy gaan doen. As Jesus hom vra om 'n offer te bring, sal hy dit met 'n blymoedige hart doen, want God het so baie vir hom gedoen en gegee.

Daar was groot vreugde in sy hart toe hy omtrent al die geld uit sy spaarrekening onttrek. Met drukskrif het hy op 'n vel papier geskryf: "Van iemand wat Jesus liefhet," en dit saam met die geld in 'n koevert gesit.

Die volgende dag is Dirk weg om vir twee weke by sy ouma te gaan kuier. Toe hy terugkom, het daar baie verrassings op hom gewag! "Anton het sy fiets vir jou

gebring," was sy moeder se woord nadat sy hom gegroet het. "Sy ouers het vir hom 'n motorfiets gekoop, aangesien hy aastaande jaar universiteit toe moet gaan. Soos jy weet is die fiets nog feitlik splinternuut en lyk net soos die een wat jy so graag wil hê."

"Mev. Wessels en al die kinders gaan nou kerk toe. Mnr. Wessels is gesond en weer by die werk. Die firma vir wie hy werk, het al die hospitaalkoste betaal. Dit het mev. Wessels só geraak, dat sy die Here Jesus aangeneem het, en sy begeer om Hom te dien. En weet jy wat, iemand het geld in haar posbus gesit met die woorde, 'Van iemand wat Jesus liefhet.'

"Daardie vel papier bewaar sy in haar Bybel, want sy sê dit was die eerste bewys dat God haar liefhet en vir haar omgee." Nog nooit het Dirk 'n Kersdag so geniet nie! Hy het gevoel dat hy saam met die wyse manne sy skatte aan die voete van die Here Jesus neergelê het!

- Oorgeneem

GOD'S CHRISTMAS REUNION

The brand new pastor and his wife, newly assigned to their first ministry to reopen a church in urban Brooklyn, arrived in early October - excited about their opportunities.

When they saw their church building, it was very run down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas Eve. They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, painting, etc. and on 18 December were ahead of schedule and just about finished.

On 19 December a terrible tempest - a driving rainstorm - hit the area and lasted for two days. On the 21st the pastor went over to the church. His heart sunk when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster about 6 feet by 8 feet to fall off the front wall of the sanctuary just behind the pulpit, beginning about head high.

The pastor cleaned the mess on the floor, and not knowing what to do else but postpone the Christmas Eve service, headed home.

On the way he noticed that a local

business was having a flea market-type sale for charity. He stopped. One of the items was a beautiful, exquisite, handmade, ivory-coloured, crocheted tablecloth, fine colours and a cross embroidered right in the centre. It was just the right size to cover up the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church.

By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus that would come 45 minutes later.

She sat in a pew and paid no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc., to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. The pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area! Then he noticed the woman walking down the centre aisle. Her face was white like a sheet.

"Pastor," she asked, "Where did you get that tablecloth?" The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right

corner to see if the initials EBG were crocheted into it there. They were. These were the initials of this same woman, and she had made this tablecloth 35 years before, in Austria.

The woman could hardly believe it as the pastor told how he had just acquired the tablecloth. The woman explained that before World War II, she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria. When the Nazis came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to follow her the next week. She was captured, sent to prison and never saw her husband or her home again. The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth, but she made the pastor keep it for the church. The pastor then insisted on driving her home. That was the least he could do. She lived on the other side of Staten Island and was only in Brooklyn for the day for a house-cleaning job.

What a wonderful service they had on Christmas Eve! The church was almost full. The music and the atmosphere were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said that they would return. One elderly man,

whom the pastor recognised from the neighbourhood, continued to sit in one of the pews and stare, and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving.

The man asked him where he got the tablecloth on the front wall, because it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war. How could there be two tablecloths so much alike?

He told the pastor how the Nazis had come and how he forced his wife to flee for her safety. He was supposed to follow her but he was arrested and put in a concentration camp. He never saw his wife or his home again for all the 35 years in between...

The pastor asked him if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. They drove to Staten Island and to the same house where the pastor had taken the woman 3 days earlier. He helped the man climb the 3 flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and **he saw the greatest Christmas reunion he could ever imagine!**

[Tears in my Heart, J Collins, Xulon Press, USA, 2007].

The Message of Christmas

The message of Christmas is a constant one. In the midst of the ever-changing world, the vacillations of man and the rise and fall of governments, our hearts cry out for stability. The message of Christmas inseparably involves Christ. Cancel Christ out of Christmas (Xmas) and you are back to the human, the transient, the instability of a decaying world and world systems, accentuated by the excesses of what is called the "Festive Season".

Christless Christmases have been the excuse and reason for more sin, revelry and unrighteousness than is possible to assess. How many lives, characters, homes and friendships have been ruined in the revelries generally indulged in at Christmas time? The excuse often offered is: "It is only Christmas once a year." **A Christless Christmas is a dangerous and treacherous thing!** The true Christmas, with the emphasis on Christ, is a "Joy to the world".

In a strife-torn world Christmas is "Peace on Earth." Amidst the

hatred and distrust between individuals and the peoples of the world, it is "goodwill toward men."

What is most attractive to man about the true Christmas message is its immutability. No season, age, country, tongue or circumstance can change it. Its effectiveness has been proven over a period of more than 2 000 years. It is not seasonal but perennial, not national but international, not selective but universal, not temporary but eternal...

To all who believe in Him, the CHRIST of Christmas, He is the LIFE, JOY and PEACE for time and eternity! May your Christmas be Christ-centred, because then it will be a happy Christmas!



THE INCOMPARABLE CARPENTER

Socrates taught for 40 years, Plato for 50, Aristotle for 40 and Jesus for only 3½ years. Yet the influence of Christ's ministry infinitely transcends the impact left by the combined years of teaching by these greatest of philosophers.

Jesus painted no pictures, yet some of the finest artists such as Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci received their inspiration from Him.

Jesus wrote no poetry, but Dante, Milton and scores of the world's greatest poets were inspired by Him.

Jesus composed no music. Still Haydn, Händel, Beethoven, Bach and Mendelssohn reached their highest perfection of melody in the music they composed for His praise.

Every sphere of human greatness has been enriched by this humble Carpenter of Nazareth!

- Selected

JESUS IS WONDERLIK

"n Kind is vir ons gebore... Hy word genoem Wonderbaar" (Jesaja 9:5).

JESUS CHRISTUS is in alle oopsigte besonders.

Van Hom is gesê:

"Ek vind geen skuld in hierdie man nie" (Luk. 23:4).

"Nooit het 'n mens so gespreek soos hierdie mens nie" (Joh. 7:46).

"Waarlik, hierdie man was regverdig" (Luk. 23:47).

God Self het uit die hemel gesê: "Dit is My geliefde

Seun, luister na Hom!" (Matt. 3:17).

Jesus is die Eerste en die Laaste wat werklik God is en terselfdertyd ook sondelose Mens. Hy het 'n menslike bestaan aanvaar sodat ons 'n Goddelike erfenis kan verkry. Hy het Seun van die Mens geword sodat ons kinders van God kan word.

Toe Hy nog 'n Baba was, het koning Herodes bang geword vir Hom.

Toe Hy 'n Seun was, was die leraars verwonderd oor Sy wysheid en kennis. Toe Hy 'n Man was, het Hy oor die natuur

beheer gehad. Hy kon op die water loop en die stormagtige see in 'n oomblik kalm laat word.

Hy kon enige siekte genees sonder medisyne.

Hy het nooit 'n boek geskryf nie, en tog kan die grootste biblioteke volgemaak word met boeke wat oor Hom geskryf is.

Hy het nie musiek geskryf nie, tog is daar meer liedere en musiek oor Hom gekomponeer as oor enige iets en enigmant anders.

Groot manne het gekom en

gegaan, maar net HY leef nog van die begin af.

Herodes kon Hom nie doodkry nie, Satan kon Hom nie verleien nie, die dood kon Hom nie oorwin nie, en die graf kom Hom nie gevange hou nie. Elke mens skiet in een of ander oopsig tekort, maar nie HY nie. Hy is die unieke God!

Om HOM te ken, is die grootste ondervinding wat 'n mens kan hê. Hy is die enigste Verlosser en die beste Vriend wat daar is.

Daarom kan elkeen van ons saam met miljoene ander gelowiges sê: "**Hy is wonderlik!**"

- Oorgeneem

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WHY THE STAGE IS SET FOR THE END TIMES

As a student of Bible prophecy for almost 30 years, and specifically End-time Bible prophecy, no other time has seemed as close to the end times as right now.

Why do I say this? Because, particularly in the past year, the geopolitical and economic stage has been set for the fulfilment of several end-time prophecies.

We now have several potential crises looming on the horizon. And those potential crises are the same ones the Bible says we'll experience either in the Tribulation Period or the days immediately preceding the Tribulation. Below are just a few:

The Gog and Magog War

The Bible points to a future attack on Israel known as the Gog and Magog War (Ezekiel 38-39). It says a military alliance that includes Russia, Iran, Turkey, and a number of Muslim nations will attack Israel "in the latter days" (Ezekiel 38:8) when God brings His people home from among the enemy nations (Ezekiel 39:27).

Today, we see those nations forming an alliance for the first time - an alliance that has never existed in world history! Russia, Iran, and Turkey all have an active military presence in Syria, meaning they're right on Israel's northern border at this moment.

Why is this important? Because Ezekiel specifically says this alliance will attack Israel from the north (Ezekiel 38:15; Ezekiel 39:2). In addition, the ancient territory of Magog covers a number of modern-day nations, one of which is Afghanistan.

Up until recently, it was difficult to imagine US-occupied Afghanistan joining the Gog and Magog invasion. But now? With the Taliban back in control, it would be odd if they didn't join this invading alliance. The way nations are aligned today, the Gog and Magog invasion could take place tomorrow. All the pieces are in place. Even just a few years ago, that wasn't the case.

Global War Prospects

While "rumours of war" have been common since the end of World War II, the current situation is different. The world is in the midst of an energy crisis. Europe has seen natural gas prices surge in the past month. China and India are experiencing rolling blackouts of electrical service. Not only will this create problems in an already broken global supply chain, but these are the con-

ditions which often give rise to war. And energy resource issues could provide the spark that ignites the next world war.

For example, China threatens to invade Taiwan on an almost daily basis. If China does invade, the United States claims it will defend Taiwan. If it occurs, such a conflict will devastate the world. Both China and the US are nuclear powers, and both likely have high-tech space weapons, cyber-warfare capabilities, and innovative weapons never before seen on a battlefield.

Such a conflict could easily erupt into World War III. Even if it doesn't, the global economy would collapse and the global supply chain would be irreparably broken if the two largest economic powers went to war.

The same is true with regard to Israel and Iran. Both nations have been engaged in a type of "cold war" for years, and with each passing month, the prospect of all-out war only increases. A conflict between the two could pull the Middle East and the entire world into a cataclysmic war.

Throw in India's border disputes with China and Pakistan as well as North Korea's belligerence toward its Southern neighbour and the United States, and the prospects of global war are probably the highest they've been in the post-Cold War era.

At any moment, a flare up in any one of several hotspots could cascade into a global war. Yet, contrary to popular belief, the world will survive World War III.

The death toll will be enormous, but the human race won't be annihilated (Revelation 6:4). The Bible says a global war will coincide with the Tribulation Period and precede the global rule of the Antichrist. Right now, the odds of a devastating global war appear high.

Global Inflation Prospects

Shutdowns, travel regulations, and other COVID restrictions have wreaked havoc on the global supply chain since early 2020, and it's only getting worse. Lack of shipping containers, global port congestion, and a lack of workers to produce, transport, and stock goods have led to shortages in everything from toilet paper and microprocessors to chicken wings and tractor tires.

Meanwhile, central bank and government policies creating low interest rates and instituting rent/mortgage moratoriums,



student loan moratoriums, stimulus checks, and tax credits have only added to demand. Basic economics says if you lower supply and increase demand, you get higher prices. We're seeing that right now, especially at the grocery store. Don't expect it to get better. The Bible says the world will experience an unprecedented hyperinflation during the Tribulation Period. Following the global war outlined in Revelation 6:4, the world will experience a time when an entire day's wages will barely buy enough food to survive (Revelation 6:5-6).

Given the inflation and shortages we're already seeing, how bad will it get if a major war breaks out anywhere in the world, much less an all-out global war like the one foretold in Revelation 6?

The Rising Mark of the Beast System

Throughout the world, governments are pushing COVID vaccines. Those who refuse the jab face a long list of penalties, including loss of employment, healthcare, freedom of movement, and liberty in general. Those pushing vaccine mandates and vaccine passports seek to coerce people into compliance. The goal is to ostracize the unvaccinated from society.

If these coercive policies remain in place, they'll create a mark of the beast system indistinguishable in impact from the true mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16). In doing so, they'll pave the way for the rise of the Antichrist and the actual mark of the beast as outlined in the Book of Revelation.

The Bible says those who refuse the mark of the beast will be shut out of the global economy. They'll be unable to buy or sell anything without it (Revelation 13:17). Today, we see the stage being set for the fulfilment of this prophecy. In some places, vaccine pass-

ports are required to appear anywhere - in public, including grocery stores. Is it really hard to believe that such passports will one day be required to engage in any buying or selling transactions?

The Days of Noah and Lot

Jesus said when He returns, the world will be "like it was in the days of Noah" (Matthew 24:37).

Jesus said, "*In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. People didn't realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes*" (Matthew 24:38-39 - NLT)

Is this what we see in the world today? I think so. Even after 19 months of a global pandemic, a global supply chain crisis, and threats of war, people are still enjoying banquets and parties and weddings. In other words, much of life remains normal. After a series of events that should have shaken the world from its slumber, most people continue to go about their daily lives unaware of the times in which we live.

The times in which we live are clear to anyone who knows the Bible. We are living in the days just before the Tribulation Period commences.

Jesus will soon return to take His Church (1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18). How can I be so sure? Because Jesus says so! Jesus said when you see all the signs He and the prophets said to look for, you should look up (Luke 21:28), and we see those signs right now.

The Convergence of Signs

So what are these signs? Jesus and the prophets pointed to

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WHY THE STAGE IS SET FOR THE END TIMES

Continued from p. 8

dozens and dozens of signs. This article only cites a few, but each one is undeniable. Their convergence for the first time in history tells us the return of the Lord is close at hand. In addition to the events already mentioned, these signs include:

- Israel back in the Land (Jeremiah 23:7-8; Ezekiel 39:28; Isaiah 11:12; Psalm 107:3; Ezekiel 20:34; Isaiah 11:11-12).
- The Jewish people in control of Jerusalem (Luke 21:24-28).
- The Gospel preached throughout the world (Matthew 24:14).

- An increase in travel and knowledge (Daniel 12:4).
- The exponential rise of earthquakes, deception, wars, etc. (Matthew 24:3-8).
- Israel surrounded by enemies (Psalm 83:4; Psalm 83:12; Ezekiel 11:14-17; Ezekiel 35:10).
- Israel's exceedingly great army (Ezekiel 37:10; Zechariah 12:6; Zechariah 12:8).
- The rise of a United Europe (Daniel 2, Daniel 7, Revelation 17).
- The Rise of a Global Government - New World Order (Revelation 13:7-17).
- The State of Mankind (2 Timothy 3:1-4).

- Denial of the Signs (2 Pet. 3:3-4).

Stay Awake

Jesus commanded us to watch for these signs (Matthew 24:42). He scolded the Pharisees and religious leaders when they failed to recognize the signs of His first coming (Matthew 16:3).

Will He do any different for those who fail to recognize the signs of His second coming?

Jesus warned us not to be caught sleeping when He returns (Mark 13:36). Now is the time to point out

these signs to others and warn them the end is near.

If you've been waiting to share the Gospel with someone, don't wait any longer. You may not have another opportunity.

JESUS IS COMING. THE SIGNS ARE ALL AROUND US!

- Britt Gillette. He is author of the free ebook *Coming to Jesus* as well as the books *Signs of the Second Coming & Racing Toward Armageddon*.

www.prophecynewswatch.com

CHANGED ON CHRISTMAS EVE

A YOUNG ENGLISH WOMAN married a man in the Government service. Her husband was a light-hearted young man, who smoked, drank and gambled like the other young men of his set.

As the years went by, he was promoted in service, had large responsibilities, but he became a hardened gambler and the leader of a circle who boasted that they could individually drink a bottle of whiskey and be nothing the worse for it.

As the husband went deeper into sin, his wife, through anxiety on his account, became deeply worried about her own soul, and as a lost, guilty sinner (Rom. 3:9-19), cast herself and all her burdens on the Saviour and became a new creature in Christ, with one burning desire - to bring her husband to Christ as well. For thirteen years she prayed with never-failing faith that the Lord would convert her husband.

Every Sunday she would ask him to accompany her to church and he as often refused. He would say: "If you will go with me and my friends once, I will go forty times to church with you." She refused.

One Christmas Eve the husband went to dinner with his friends before going home to his wife and children with his usual Christmas presents. He was in good spirits and laughingly distributed the gifts. To his horror he found that he had for the first time since he was married, forgotten to buy his wife a present.

He was utterly at a loss to account for this, and said to her: "I don't know how this happened but to make up for it, you may ask what you like, and I will give it to you."

She quietly and earnestly said: "Come with me to the Church service tonight. That will be my present."

"Oh, no," he said, "I cannot do that; come on, ask for some present." But she stood firm, and reminded him that he had promised. When the time came for his wife to go to the service, he overheard the children say to her: "Do you think father will go with us?"

"Yes," she said, "your father has never broken a promise to me." He had no choice!

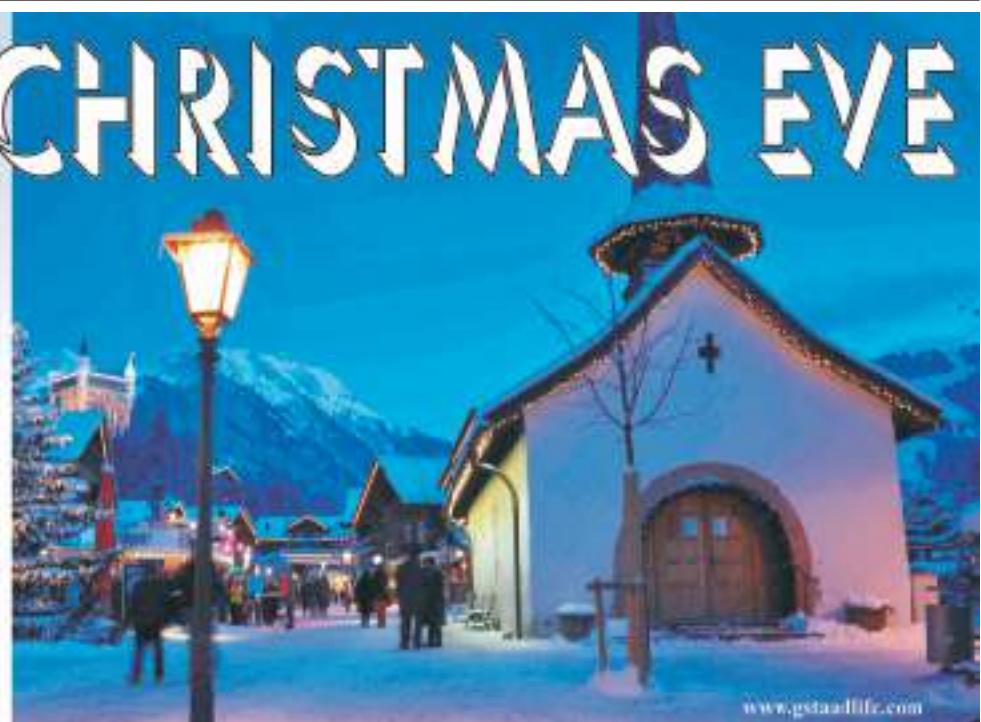
Later that evening, after they had returned from the service, one of the pictures in the hallway caught his eye. It was a picture of Christ on the Cross of Calvary. He never liked the picture, but tonight it smote him to the heart.

Words he had long forgotten came to mind: "He was despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief... He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities... the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:3-5).

His wasted past and the prospect of an awful Eternity rolled in like billows over his soul. He realised that his only hope for peace was in this One, Who was despised, rejected, wounded and bruised!

He looked and looked, until it seemed to him as if it were Christ Himself hanging on that Cross in the picture and saying: "I died for you."

"For me, Lord?" and there, in soul agony, he called on the Saviour to save him and to put away from him forever the desire for all sin. Like the "chief of sinners he fell to the earth" (Acts 9:4) and upon his



knees in his own house. With no one near but God, he acknowledged his "manifold transgressions" (Amos 5:12), and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his own and only Saviour.

He believed on Him "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25), and rose from his knees, a free man, with Christ as his Saviour and almighty Deliverer!

That very night he went to his old companions and told them what the Lord Jesus had done for him. At first they thought he was joking and laughed at him, but eventually they had to admit that if God can save a drinking, gambling, swearing sinner of the deepest dye and make him a new creature in Christ, He can save anyone!

HE IS ALSO BOTH ABLE AND WILLING TO SAVE YOU!

[From: *The Railway Messenger*, December 1996].

'n Goeie Advertensie

Om jouself 'n Christen te noem, is een ding. Om 'n Christen genoem te word deur diegene wat jou lewe dophou, is 'n heel ander storie (Anoniem).

"Daarom, broers, moet julle julle des te meer daarvoor beywer om deur julle lewe te bewys dat God julle geroep en verkies het" (2 Petrus 1:10).

Om deur God geroep te wees, is wonderlik! So noem ons onself Christene. Sonder God se genade sou ons dit nie kon wees nie. Maar kan mense dit sien? Ervaar hulle in jou lewe dat die genade van God regtig 'n verskil gemaak het? Ervaar hulle wat nie glo nie, dat jy God se liefde en omgee uitstraal? Dis moeilike vrae, nie waar nie? Om 'n Christen te wees, is nie iets wat ons net moet weet nie. **Die toets of die genade van God ons lewe oorgeneem het, lê uiteindelik in die uitleef van daardie genade teenoor alle mense!**

Gebed: Here, ek bely voor U dat ek nie altyd 'n goeie advertensie vir U is nie. Vergewe my daarvoor en maak my deur U Gees 'n lewendige advertensie van U liefde teenoor elke mens wat vandag my pad kruis. Amen.

[PITKOS vir die PAD, Annes Nel, CUM, 2004].

Ses-en-twintig Wagte

Het u al die dringende gevoel gekry om vir iemand te bid, net om dan die persoon se naam vinnig voor die Here te noem, of op 'n lys te plaas om later voorbidding te vra? Dalk sal hierdie ware verhaal 'n verandering maak aan die wyse waarop u aan gebed dink; dalk ook aan die manier waarop u bid.

'n Sendeling het die volgende verhaal met sy tuisgemeente in Michigan, VSA, gedeel terwyl hy daar met vakansie was...

Die buitewyke van die stad kom uiteindelik in sig. Ek is al twee dae lank op my fiets se saal, op pad van die klein hospitaal waar ek diens doen. Dit is deel van my werk om elke tweede week vanaf die hospitaal deur 'n digte woud stad toe te ry vir die aankoop van sekere benodigdhede. Van die twee dae op pad, slaap ek altyd een nag oor by 'n halfwegpunt.

Ek ry by die eerste huise verby en in die rigting van 'n bank. Nadat ek geld getrek het, moet ek medikasie en ander noodsaaklike aankoop. Daarna moet ek feitlik dadelik die terugreis aanpak, omdat die hospitaal die voorraad dringend benodig.

Die laaste ding wat ek verwag het, was om tydens hierdie gewone rustige reis op twee bakleiende mans af te kom. Maar vandag gebeur dit.

Toek ek egter op die toneel verskyn, hou die geveg summier op. Dit gee my die geleentheid om aandag te skenk aan die een wat nogal ernstige beseerings opgedoen het. Nadat ek hom behandel het, staan ek bietjie tyd af om met hom oor sy

sielstoestand te praat. Ek voel na 'n ruk dat die boodskap tog op goeie grond gevall het, en daarna sorg ek dat hy veilig en gemaklik is voordat ek verder gaan.

Twee aande later is ek ook veilig tuis, net om veertien dae later weer dieselfde baie kilometers te moet aandurf. In die stad wag daar egter 'n groter verrassing as die vorige keer.

Die jongman wat ek gehelp het, wag my op my roete in. Dit kom vir my snaaks voor: hoe weet hy wanneer ek hier verbykom, tensy hy my toevallig gesien het, of dalk my heen-en-weer ryery lankal dophou?

Daar is nietemin nie tyd om daaroor te tob nie want hy dring dadelik daarop aan dat ek moet luister na iets wat hy vir my wil vertel.

Ek stem in om 'n tydjie saam met hom deur te bring en dit is toe dat sy eerlikheid my uitbou! Is sy storie enigsins moontlik? So wonder ek toe hy klaar gepraat het.

Dié krel en sy trawante moes my, volgens sy vertelling, skynbaar vir 'n geruime tyd al in die oog gehou het. Hy vertel dat hulle my 'n ruk gelede in die woud in gevolg het, omdat hulle weet dat ek medikasie en kontantgeld vervoer. Hulle het ook geweet waar ek oornag en was van plan om my om die lewe te bring en dan die geld en medikasie (waaronder sterk verdowingsmiddels) te steel.

Net hier kry sy storie 'n snaakse kinkel. "Toe ons die nag jou kampplek nader, besef ons dadelik dat al ons beplanning en

moeite pure verniet was. Ons moes daarvan gedink het dat die oornagplek deur wagte bewaak word. Ons het ook nie eens probeer om hulle te oorrompel nie want ons het nie minder nie as ses-en-twintig van hulle getel. Vir 'n geveg met soveel ouens het ons nie kans gesien nie en het toe maar stil-stil deur die bos teruggekeer stad toe."

Ek val hom liggend in die rede. Ek kan nie uitmaak wat hy met so 'n verregaande storie wil bereik nie. Al band wat tussen ons twee is, is die feit dat ek hom onlangs gehelp het. Wat sou hom besiel om my so 'n vreemde verhaal te vertel? Soek hy dalk simpatie, geld, geestelike hulp?

Wat my gelag ontlok het, is die storie oor die wagte. Ek verseker hom dat ek daardie aand, soos altyd, alleen by die kampplek in die woud was. Sy reaksie verbaas my. Hy is byna verontwaardig dat ek hom nie glo nie.

"Meneer, ek was nie die enigste een wat die wagte gesien het nie. My vyf vriende het hulle ook gesien, en ons het moeite gedoen om hulle te tel. Hulle teenwoordigheid was die enigste rede waarom ons bang geword en die aftog geblaas het."

Terwyl die Sendeling die verhaal aan sy tuisgemeente in Michigan vertel, word sy boodskap ineens deur iemand in die gehoor onderbreek. Die man staan op en vra: "Kan u ons die presiese datum gee waarop hierdie gebeurtenis plaasgevind het?"

Die Sendeling verskaf die datum en tyd en dit lyk asof die man in

die gehoor nie glo wat hy hoor nie.

"Mag ek 'n paar oomblikke van u tyd in beslag neem?" vra hy respektvol, maar duidelik meer as net 'n bietjie opgewonde.

"Die nag waarop u hierdie ervaring in Afrika gehad het, was ditoggend hier by ons, en ek was besig om gholf te speel. **Tydens die spel was ek op die punt om 'n sethou te speel toe ek 'n oorweldigende drang voel om spesifiek vir u te bid.**

Dit was vir my op daardie oomblik regtig snaaks, want hoewel ek u as 'n vroeëre lid van die gemeente geken het en geweet het dat u diens doen in Afrika, was dit sowaar die laaste ding waaraan ek op daardie oomblik gedink het.

Die begeerte het plotseling gekom, maar die gevoel was so sterk dat ek onverwyld 'n aantal mans in die gemeente gebel het om my hier in die kerk te ontmoet sodat ons ernstig vir u kon bid. Hulle is getroue kerkgangers en behoort vanaand almal hier te wees. Mag ek vra dat hulle opstaan?"

Die spreker kyk toe terwyl die manne een vir een op hulle voete kom. Toe knik hy - almal was daar.

Ook die Sendeling se oë het elkeen gevolg toe hulle opstaan. Hy het nie almal van hulle geken nie, maar dit was ook nie so belangrik nie. Hy was te besig om hulle te tel...

Daar was presies ses-en-twintig!

[Uit: God is op die Troon, Jannie Hough, Creatix Boeke, 2009].

Jer. 20:11

★★★ **B&B** *uit die Hand*

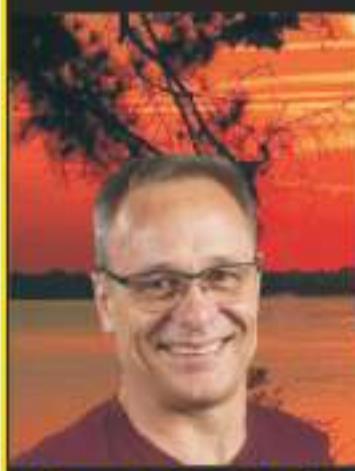
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AGS BAILLIE PARK



KERK IN BEWEGING
Dienste @ 09:30 elke Sondag

PREDIKER: PAST. JOHAN NORTJE
083 280 8971
SONDAE OM 09:30
WYNNESTRAAT 18 POTCHEFSTROOM

Pastoor Johan Nortje 083 280 8971