

Merry Christmas from Ancient Writings

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Hello my friend,

I'm so glad you're reading this. It's an interesting thing to write something in private, in weakness, making all kinds of changes and edits, hoping someone will get something out of it later. So, I hope this serves you somehow. I do enjoy the opportunity to create something worthwhile.

I suppose the same experience happened to prophets and writers many years ago when they were writing the scriptures. I'm sure they knew that what they were writing was important, and they probably had an idea that someone would read it, if the Lord was inspiring them to write it. But I don't think they really comprehended the millions of people who would pour over and study their words every day for many years. It really is a marvelous work the Lord has instituted. He has so much wisdom and patience (of course.)

Maybe we can learn something from this.

Here's the story from scripture that we're celebrating this week: The God of the World (and our universe) left his position of ultimate authority and power in all things to become a helpless, human baby.

How could this possibly make sense or work?

I don't know. My finite mind can only come up with a couple of reasons. And only because I've studied the scriptures.

The Godhead

First, when we talk about 'God', we need to remember that there is a Godhead. And that the three members of the Godhead are a lot more equal than we can understand. They are all 'God', God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father even allowed Jesus to call himself the Father because of [Divine Investiture of Authority](#) (look that up in the Gospel Library.)

So, I suppose there was a little back up in the heavens while Jesus was a bit incapacitated as a baby, and human in general.

The second reason is that Heavenly Father (and Jesus) knew what had to be done, and were patient. They knew that there had to be an earthly, human sacrifice for our sins, someone who lived the entire experience of life and yet never surrendered to sin or disobedience, "having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father" (Mosiah 15:2). He was the 'Lamb of God' without blemish. That means he had to be a real human person, born as a baby, living a regular life, not just showing up as a heavenly being out of the blue and doing some grand thing (even though his birth was a little different.)

The patience came when Jesus was here, and maybe even quite capable in his 20's, but it wasn't time yet for him to perform his work. After the amazing sign of his wonderful birth, people had to wait for 30 years until something significant began to happen. Think about Mary and Joseph, and all those who knew about his special birth. They must have always been wondering when things were going to happen. They needed patience.

Book of Mormon Christmas

This point is more apparent in the Book of Mormon story of the Savior's birth in 3 Nephi chapter 1 (recommended reading.) As you'll remember, people knew about the prophecies of Samuel the Lamanite and other prophets about the sign of Christ's birth, when there would be a night with no darkness. The wicked people were trying to spread doubt by saying that the time had passed, so it wasn't going to happen. And as punishment, they were going to kill all the people who believed in the prophecies. But Nephi "cried mightily to his God in behalf of his people" the day before the execution and was answered by the Lord. Think about this as one of the last things the Lord says before he exits his all-powerful position in heaven and becomes a hungry, crying baby.

"Lift up your head and be of good cheer; for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world, to show unto the world that I will fulfil all that which I have caused to be spoken by the

mouth of my holy prophets.

Behold, I come unto my own, to fulfil all things which I have made known unto the children of men from the foundation of the world, and to do the will, both of the Father and of the Son—of the Father because of me, and of the Son because of my flesh. And behold, the time is at hand, and this night shall the sign be given." (3 Nephi 1:13-14)

This is why we celebrate Christmas. Because it was a dramatic sign that showed the world that God will fulfill all the prophecies that He causes to be spoken by His prophets.

Opposition

Soon after it happened Satan began to send lyings among the people, "to harden their hearts, to the intent that they might not believe in those signs and wonders which they had seen; but notwithstanding these lyings and deceivings the more part of the people did believe, and were converted unto the Lord." (3 Nephi 1:22)

And some people thought that they didn't have to live the law of Moses anymore, but "in this thing they did err, having not understood the scriptures." They had to wait. "The law was not yet fulfilled, and that it must be fulfilled in every whit." (3 Nephi 1: 24-25)

Even after great signs, they needed to have patience for the plan to unfold.

We can also be patient. And wait for the Lord's plan to unfold in our life. Let's not be deceived by lyings. This grand event of Christ's birth did happen. That's why the whole world still celebrates it two thousand years later.

Let us also remember the miraculous 'signs and wonders' of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the restoration of Christ's church, even though it has been 200 years since His appearance to Joseph Smith. The proclamation of the restoration from our latter day prophets and apostles this year is a powerful testimony that the grand work of God continues to move forward on the earth. Read that proclamation here: <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/multimedia/file/restoration-proclamation-2020-april.pdf>

Indeed, we have reason to have a joyful, merry Christmas.

Thanks for reading. Both my writings, and those of writers thousands of years ago. It matters.

Invitation Sunday

Today is a special Sunday where all ward members and invited friends can attend our service in-person at 1:00pm. We will expand the seating capacity while keeping safe distances by opening the cultural hall.

Come enjoy a spiritual Christmas feast, with special musical numbers, a piano and vocal solo, and inspiring messages about the Savior.

You can also still watch the broadcast from home at this link:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQM_SmjDFmwHAA6lfjtseg/live

Merry Christmas!

Bishop Williams

P.S.

- Last chance tithing settlement today between 3-4pm. Sign up here: <http://calendly.com.bishoprexawilliams>
- Be inspired by ward member stories on our web site here: <http://pennycreek.org>
- Our family has enjoyed learning about Jesus Christ and His apostles from the amazing new series called "The Chosen". You can watch it for free at <http://byutv.org>, or on the BYUTV app. Or, there's actually an app called 'The Chosen' with all the episodes of Season 1 and other behind the scenes stories.

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