

LAMPLIGHTER

DECEMBER 2008

THEME: JESUS SAID... "I AM"

JOHN 20:30, 31

But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" {62} "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

(Mark 14:61-62 NIV)

Every day of our lives is a little Advent, a time to "get ready" for Jesus, to prepare for Him. We must prepare ourselves and, as did John the Baptist, prepare those around us to receive Christ. The method that proved successful for John the Baptist was reliance on the power of the spoken Word. God would have us to be the deliberate instruments of His Word also. Through us He speaks to modern man to ready them for the Christ who comes. He makes us little-Advent messengers of His grace by which He comes into the lives of our families and our neighbors.

The frustrating aspect of preparing His way is the reluctance of others to believe. Testimony after testimony is given about the coming and arriving of our Savior. The prophets foretold of His coming. Isaiah 7:14 says, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." Isaiah continued in 9:6, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." The Prophet Micah reveals this prophecy in 5:2, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." The angel announced His arrival at Bethlehem, (Luke 2:10-12 NIV) "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. {11} Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. {12} This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'" Matthew wrote of His Incarnation in Chapter one verses eighteen through twenty-five.

The truth about Jesus is not only given a voice in the writing of Scripture, but also in the living testimony of Jesus Himself. Nicodemus noted that no one could do the things he does in the countless miracles performed by Jesus unless God were with him. We have come to know through the power of His Word that not only was God with Him, but He was God. The high priest (Mark 14:61-62) tore his garment as a form of judicial act expressing the fact that he regarded Jesus' answer as blasphemous. There continues to be skepticism, cynicism, and unbelief running rampant among us today. 2 Cor 4:4 NIV: "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." 1 Peter 5:8 NIV: "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." John 8:44 NIV: "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." 1 John 2:15-17 NIV: "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."

As we journey through advent to celebrate the birth of our Savior in Bethlehem, we prepare for his coming. We ready ourselves for his return! In the celebration of His incarnation, we affirm our certainty in His coming to take us to be with Him in heaven. May the fulfillment of His eternal promise fill your hearts with Christmas joy and peace!

Close with prayer, the Lord's Prayer, Benediction, and Song – #10 "Joy to the World"