



Ron & Cheryl Myers

God's Word For Isan – Christmas Newsletter

December 2021

A Faith-based Ministry Sustained Through the Prayers and Partnership of God's People



"Glory To God in The Highest"

"Peace On Earth; Good Will Toward Men"

By Ron Myers



Greetings Again in the Name of Our Savior, Jesus Christ,

I love Christmastime and all its ambiance, as I'm sure you do as well. The warmth of God's Spirit is palpable during this season. It's when billboards remind us that "Jesus is the Reason for the Season." This corresponds with the "fullness of time" that God chose to send His special gift to mankind—His only begotten Son, who came to be the *Savior of the World*—including you and me (Galatians 4:4; 1 John 4:14). It's uniquely relevant for all who embrace the Christ child by faith as their own personal Lord and Savior (Romans 6:23).

Note the all-inclusive nature of the announcement the angel of the Lord proclaimed to the shepherds, "*Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people*" (Luke 2:10). God's angelic messenger said all, not just to a select few. This corresponds with verse 14, where a great host of angels praised God, saying, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men*" (Luke 2:14). The proclamation encompassed all humankind. Sadly, many modern translations limit the angel's good-will announcement was only "*to those whom God is well pleased*" or "*to men on whom his favor rests.*" Yet according to Scripture, God is well pleased with just one person—His only begotten Son. Seven New Testament verses concur, which read, "*In whom I am well pleased,*" referring to Christ. We Praise God that He offered the gift of Salvation to all who would believe, starting with the lowly shepherds—not just a preselected few!

People approach Christmas in different ways. Erecting nativity scenes, caroling, special church services, and music all speak to the *reason for the season*—honoring the birth of the Christ Child. Then there's our Christmastime traditions which we all enjoy; decorating Christmas trees, hanging stockings, exchanging gifts, Santa Claus, reindeer, family get-togethers, big dinners, warm hearths, holly, mistletoe, Christmas music, caroling, and Currier and Ives winter scenes. Combining these with the real *reason for the season* makes it all enjoyable and worthwhile.

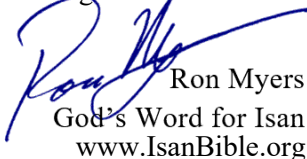
Christmas traditions are good, not evil. Therefore, we should have no qualms in sharing them with our children—separating Biblical fact from cultural tradition instead of shunning the whole thing in legalistic rigidity. If doing so, we risk depriving our kids of enjoying something good instead of weakening their sense of worth or turning them into little legalists. For instance, although today's Santa is a mythical figure, we should instruct our children about the real Santa—a fourth-century Christian named Saint Nicholas. He was born to Christian parents who left him a sizable inheritance. Nicholas was known for his compassion and generosity, shown through anonymous gifts to the poor. These gift-giving acts are what we emulate today, along with God's gift to us all—the Christ child who became our Savior and King.

Unfortunately, commercial marketing has overshadowed the real reason behind Christmas to the point where, for many, Jesus is no more than a passing name on a billboard ad. Christmas spending also constitutes a boon for merchants, who rely on its income in hopes of recouping losses incurred during the year. Christmas commercialization is prevalent throughout Buddhist Thailand as well. Stores are colorfully decorated with Santa, Snowmen, and Christmas lights—which also decorate their spirit shrines—but no sign of the Christ Child or nativity scenes. Another Thai holiday is their traditional Asian New Year's celebration, which takes precedence over Christmas, even for *some* Christians.

Regrettably, the more "woke" liberalism consumes our nation, the more Christian values and traditions are shunned as *Scroogism* advances. Wishing others a Merry Christmas is politically incorrect, so it became *Happy Holidays* for fear of "offending" the uninitiated. Christmas trees (though not associated) became *winter* or *holiday* trees—like Thanksgiving, which became *Turkey Day* for many. What can we do? Let's each do our part in keeping *The Reason for the Season* alive and well by boldly proclaiming a hearty *Merry Christmas* to every friend and passerby!

Cheryl and I *bless* you for supporting our faith ministry to the Thai people throughout 2021. It's sustained solely by your prayers and tax-deductible partnership. We pray for you as well, that God would richly bless you and yours, and overshadow you with His Loving watch-care.

Praising God for His Indescribable Gift!


Ron Myers
God's Word for Isan
www.IsanBible.org

Concerning celebrating Christmas, we can enjoy the divine truths of Christmas alongside our traditional festivities. I'm *not* suggesting making the two of equal value. That's called syncretism, meaning the fusion of different systems of belief. A prime example of syncretism is seen in Thailand where three entirely separate belief systems are merged into one faith and practice. These are: Buddhism (the religious *practice* of doing good to attain Nirvana); Brahminism (the spiritual *protection* of amulets and incantations); Animism (the fearful *pacification* of evil spirits through animal sacrifices). These, combined with folklore and long-held superstitions are what the majority of Thai Buddhists embrace.

Interested in Helping Out?

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