



Celebrate Home

What Is To Come

by Azar Jackson

As we decorate the Christmas tree hanging up ornaments, untangling and strangling lights, and displaying our ornaments, I would like for us to pause for a moment and think about how does the Christmas story, the birth of Jesus, resonate in our lives in this modern age of 2022? What are we truly



“displaying” around the holidays when so many people are grieving the loss of loved ones or burden with poverty or experiencing some kind(s) of mental illness? What story are we telling?

The Christmas story is extraordinary in that a virgin girl (12-16 years old) is pregnant carrying the Christ child. The divine spirit uses Mary’s virginity to stir up good trouble. It is in the darkness something magical is happening inside of Mary’s womb-- Jesus is developing. I think we tend to overlook the importance of the virgin Mary giving birth. It takes destruction—ripping, breaking, tearing, shredding, expelling of her womb to deliver the Christ child. Christ chose to enter the world through a process that is taxing, scary, painful, chaotic, and messy. And yet it is in the darkness and only in the darkness eternal

hope appears. That anticipation for what is to come sustains us through dark times.

Good news spread throughout the world that something extraordinary is about to happen where suffering and pain takes place. When the virgin Mary goes into labor, I cannot imagine the amount of pain she had to endure without the conveniences of modern medicine. Can you here the virgin Mary screaming as she tries to muster strength to push? It is peculiar to me that it takes a volatile process for a child to enter the world. Something magical happens when destruction and creation collide. It is in this luminal space transformation happens. Jesus is born. The world rejoices and sings “joy to the world”. How did we get to joy? Joy is an emotion and inner feeling that outwardly expresses happiness and connects meaning and purpose. We experience joy when the pressures of pain and suffering release. Joy understands what barriers we overcame and the heart aches we endured. Joy is those tears of happiness overcoming pain. We experience joy by going through tragedy.

This holiday season, I would like for us to reflect what we have been through to get to now. The Christmas story reminds us that something extraordinary awaits us. Yes, as a community we are hurting and grieving but God sustains us, and we can expect that joy will be around the corner.

Advent Scripture Reference Lectionary
[Psalm 42](#); [Ezekiel 47:1-12](#); [Jude 1:17-25](#)

Advent Hymn Reflection
[“Jesus Christ the Apple Tree”](#)
by Elizabeth Poston, performed by Seraphic Fire



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