

IN SPITE OF
EVERYTHING

Christmas



M. Basilea Schlink

*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
Counsellor, Mighty God, Ever-
lasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6

“For to us a child is born.” A little child? What significance can a little child have for us in a world rocked by violence, uprisings, terror, epidemics and natural disasters? Someone strong is what we surely need now. Someone who can save the world and curb the forces of destruction. With terrible events unfolding in many countries around the world, we are gripped with a sense of helplessness. How can a frail little child in a manger possibly help?

Yet there is something special about this Child. In Isaiah 9:6 He is called “Mighty God”. For this is none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We have His testimony, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). This is why we often sing at Christmas:

A Child whose name is Mighty,
A Child who reigns supreme,
Before Him lies defeated
The devil with his schemes.

Is it really true? If anything, the evil one seems more active than ever. Daily the world grows darker, and celebrating Christmas may seem harder than ever. In the Word of God we find an answer. We come

across phrases like, “Such things must happen” (Mark 13:7). We also read, “Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things ...?” (Luke 24:26).

Almost from the moment of birth, the Child of Bethlehem was exposed to hatred. Forced to flee for His life, He spent His earliest childhood as a poor refugee in Egypt. Later, He would walk a path that ended in defeat.

Why do such things have to happen? Doesn't it contradict everything God stands for? His justice, love and power? How can He let evil have free rein? Behind it all is a plan of God originating in His heart and leading to a wonderful goal in these end times. God is Love. Why else would He have sent us His only begotten, dearly beloved Son to die on a cross?

Christmas tells us that God so loved the world – including each of us – that He made this sacrifice. What's happening now has to be seen in context of His plan of love for His world and for us individually. Then everything will make sense. Consider the path Jesus walked as an example for us to follow (1 Peter 2:21). Not once did God the Father intervene while Jesus suffered on His way to Calvary. Only after the cross was rammed into the earth and Satan seemed to have won, did God break His silence and demonstrate His power. Darkness fell, the earth shook, rocks were split. Then came Easter – resurrection.

It was amid defeat that Jesus triumphed. With His resurrection came victory for sinners, freedom from bondage to sin. What could be greater? For believers, it was a foretaste of the promised Kingdom of God.

What was true then is true today. God has a plan for our world. And in these end times He is bringing His wonderful saving purposes to fulfilment. Believers are suffering intensely and facing apparent defeat, while evil seems to be winning. But it will all end

in a glorious resurrection victory for the followers of Jesus. Their suffering will help pave the way for the kingdom of Jesus to be established in all nations.

Seeing we have such a wonderful Lord, isn't this all the more reason to celebrate Christmas, though the nations rage and evil continues to advance?

In spirit let us draw near to the Child in the manger with thanksgiving and adoration. In the words of a Christmas carol:

See, a poor little infant boy
Will bring us comfort and great joy,
The power of hell destroying
And peace on earth restoring.

At the manger, where Jesus, the Son of God, lies as a baby, we can find healing for our souls. Here we do not need to be afraid as we would in the presence of some strong man, some tyrant. No, what awaits us here is a little Child, seemingly frail, yet with the authority upon His shoulder (Isaiah 9:6), the guarantee that the final victory is His. Happy are those who belong to Him.



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