

# Blessings Of Christmas



'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.'  
Isa 9:6

A "Merry Christmas" greeting to my internet friends!  
May the real "Reason for this Season" find you well fixed both in health and in circumstances.

This may be the only five-page Christmas card you will receive this year.  
It is so planned that you can forward it to your entire e-mail list with the compliments of the author.

This Christian website has been published daily for the last 15 years.  
As an airport chaplain, these web pages are provided, year round, as day starters for the working public.

My Christmas prayer is that you will find Chapnotes such fun reading that you will be a faithful reader all year.  
In re-sending this to others, it will be helpful to let them know our internet address is: <http://www.chapnotes.org>

For each of you who participates in this ministry of sharing the Chapnotes "Merry Christmas" greetings,  
I pray your own celebration may be filled with the glory of the birth of a spirit-filled time of Christian joy!

And the simplicity of using these notes each day throughout the coming days and months  
Lies in merely copying or placing the website logo on your home page desk top!

## TUESDAY

**John 18:38-39** <sup>38</sup> Pilate said, "What is truth?" Then he went back out to the Jews and told them, "I find nothing wrong in this man. <sup>39</sup>It's your custom that I pardon one prisoner at Passover. Do you want me to pardon the 'King of the Jews'?"

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On a cold Christmas Eve in 1952, when Korea was in the throes of civil war, one young woman struggled along a village street, obviously soon to deliver a child. She pleaded with passersby,

*"Help me! Please. My baby."*

No one paid any attention to her.

A middle-aged couple walked by. The wife pushed away the young mother and sneered,

*"Where's the father? Where's your American man now?"*

The couple laughed and went on.

The young woman almost doubled up from a contraction as she watched them go. *"Please . . ."* she begged.

She had heard of a missionary living nearby who might help her. Hurriedly, she began walking to that village. If only he would help her baby. Shivering and in pain, she struggled over the frozen countryside. But the night was so cold. Snow began to fall. Realizing that the time was near to deliver her baby, she took shelter under a bridge. There, alone, her baby was born on Christmas Eve.

Worried about her newborn son, she took off her own clothes, wrapped them around the baby and held him close in the warm circle of her arms.

The next day, the missionary braved the new snow to deliver Christmas packages. As he walked along, he heard the cry of a baby. He followed the sound to a bridge. Under it, he found a young mother frozen to death, still clutching her crying new born son. The missionary tenderly lifted the baby out of her arms.

When the baby was 10 years old, his now adoptive father told him the story of his mother's death on Christmas Eve.

The young boy cried, realizing the sacrifice his mother had made for him.

The next morning, the missionary rose early to find the boy's bed empty. Seeing a fresh set of small footprints in the snow outside, he bundled up warmly in a winter coat and followed the trail. It led back to the bridge where the young mother had died.

As the missionary approached the bridge, he stopped, stunned. Kneeling in the snow was his son, naked and shivering uncontrollably. His clothes lay beside him in a small pile. Moving closer, he heard the boy say through chattering teeth:

*"Mother, were you this cold for me?"* unknown, from a Christian Christmas website

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## WEDNESDAY

**John 18:40** <sup>40</sup>*They shouted back, "Not this one, but Barabbas!" Barabbas was a Jewish freedom fighter.*

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**Mary and Joseph's Christmas journey.** As the crow flies, it was a journey of approximately 100 kilometers but traveling over hills, through villages and around rivers would likely have made the trip even longer. Christmas pictures always show Mary riding a donkey but we really have no idea of their mode of travel. In any case, whether on foot or on the back of a swaying brown animal, it wasn't an easy journey, especially for a women nearing the end of her pregnancy.

Why did she go? True, government officialdom decreed a census and that everyone must go to one's "own city," the place their families called home, for this official registration and counting. Perhaps Mary was also quite ready to leave the village of Nazareth where tongues were wagging about her pregnancy and unmarried status.

But Mary and Joseph knew they were going far from family and into a city whose streets would be clogged with traveling strangers. They were assured of no warm welcome, no cozy place to birth the expected child. Perhaps they *hoped* for a small house or a distant relative or a way for Joseph to earn money for their keep, but in almost every way, they were traveling into the unknown. The journey was long and hard, the destination uncertain.

Nearly nine months before their arrival in Bethlehem, Mary spoke life-changing words to God, words that were to comfort her in the many uncertain years ahead. "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." With those simple words of faith, she could endure the long journey on the back of a donkey, the cold streets of Bethlehem, the staring faces of strangers, and even the crude stable with its straw-lined manger.

Where is your Bethlehem? Has the path been long, the people uncaring, the circumstances burdensome? When we submit ourselves as servants to a loving God, we can—in quietness and confidence—add "May it be to me as you have said" no matter the place or position in which we find ourselves.

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After searching high and low for a Christmas tree, my husband Norm and I finally found one we liked.

That was when I spotted a woman nearby, holding up and inspecting the "perfect" tree. How could we have missed it? Even as we gathered up our tree and began making our way to the checkout stand, I kept an eye on the other woman, and watched as she carried it around the lot. Suddenly, she set it aside and started looking at other trees, clearly no longer interested in that one. I couldn't believe my eyes!

I ditched ours and quickly ran over to grab the coveted tree. As we made our way back to the checkout stand, I said to Norm, "That was a stroke of luck. I can't believe she didn't want this tree. It's perfect!"

"Not to her," Norm replied. "She just ran over and snatched up the one you had." *Mark's Musings*

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John Eberhard Faber was born at Stein, Bavaria on this day in 1822. The family business was pencils, and John and his elder brother Lothar aggressively expanded. Lothar arranged the exclusive rights to the graphite mined in Siberia in 1856, and dispatched John to the United States where he built the first large-scale pencil factory in 1861.

In grade school I got a new box of Eberhard Faber #2 pencils every year. I rarely use pencils these days, but somehow the smell of cedar and rubber lingers. Can't smell the graphite, though! -G. Armour Van Horn

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# THURSDAY

**John 19:1-3** <sup>1</sup> So Pilate took Jesus and had him whipped. <sup>2</sup> The soldiers, having braided a crown from thorns, set it on his head, threw a purple robe over him, and approached him with, <sup>3</sup> "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they greeted him with slaps in the face.

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## Why Jesus is Better Than Santa Claus

Santa lives at the North Pole... **JESUS is everywhere.**

Santa rides in a sleigh... **JESUS rides on the wind and walks on the water.**

Santa comes but once a year... **JESUS is an ever present help.**

Santa fills your stockings with goodies... **JESUS supplies all your needs.**

Santa comes down your chimney uninvited... **JESUS stands at your door and knocks, and then enters your heart only when invited.**

You have to wait in line to see Santa... **JESUS is as close as the mention of His name.**

Santa lets you sit on his lap... **JESUS lets you rest in His arms.**

Santa doesn't know your name, all he can say is "Hi little boy or girl, what's your name?"...

**JESUS knew our name before we were born. Not only does He know our name, He knows our address too. He knows our history and future and He even knows how many hairs are on our heads.**

Santa has a belly like a bowl full of jelly... **JESUS has a heart full of love**

All Santa can offer is HO HO HO... **JESUS offers health, help and hope.**

Santa says "You better not cry"... **JESUS says "Cast all your cares on me for I care for you."**

Santa's little helpers make toys... **JESUS makes new life, mends wounded hearts, repairs broken homes and builds mansions.**

Santa may make you chuckle but... **JESUS gives you joy that is your strength.**

While Santa puts gifts under your tree... **JESUS became our gift and died on a tree...the cross.**

**We need to put Christ back in CHRISTmas,** Jesus is still the reason for the season.

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You have been criticizing yourself for years and it hasn't worked. Try approving of yourself and see what happens. ~ Louise Hay

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## FRIDAY

**John 19:4-5** <sup>4</sup> Pilate went back out again and said to them, "I present Jesus to you, but I want you to know that I do not find him guilty of any crime." <sup>5</sup> Just then Jesus came out wearing the thorn crown and purple robe. Pilate announced, "Here he is: the Man."

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I still remember the time when we went on a school trip to England.

One day, the bus took us to Runnymede and the guide said, "This is the spot where King John signed the Magna Carta."

Interested, I asked, "When did that happen?"

"1215" answered the guide.

"What a shame," I commented. "We missed it by almost an hour!" *Humor Digest*

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Woman at post office: "May I have 50 Christmas stamps, Please?"

"What denomination?"

"Oh, my. Has it come to this? Well, give me ten Baptist, twenty Methodist, five Presbyterian ..." *Humor Digest*

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"Church" reasons why I don't attend sporting events: Every time I go, they ask me for money, seats are too hard, the coach never visits me, it makes me late coming home when they play overtime, and the band played some music I didn't know. Do these excuses sound familiar? *From Cybersalt*

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On a Spring Break trip, a group from our college had gone to Italy. One day we were standing just inside St. Peter's Basilica, the second largest church in the world.

The guide explained, "To put it in American terms, this church is so large that no man on earth, living or historical, could hit a baseball from one end to the other. Not Mark McGwire, not Henry Aaron, not even Babe Ruth."

My group stared in wonder for a few quiet moments at the beautiful marble sculptures, intricate paintings, and glorious mosaics all around the enormous structure.

Then a small voice in the back said, "You mean they actually let you hit baseballs in here?" *Mark's Musings*

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Today in the Arthritis Pool Exercise Class, a 90-year-old lady said, "I'm flying to Chicago for Christmas, and they probably will charge me extra for being an 'old bag!'" *Cybersalt*

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My wife banned me from using the washing machine after I mixed the wrong colors. If I'd have known that was such a horrible thing to do, I would've done it years ago. *Humor Digest*