

Alpha Counseling Service

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Dear Friends,

Watching the disintegration of the Middle East and the flood of refugees fleeing the conflict I am drawn to notice all the children. My first view of them was the little boy drowned when their boat capsized. Someone in uniform was carrying his little body along the shore and I thought what a tragedy. So young and his life already over because of the heartless cruelty of men in powerful places.

That brought me to think of the little refugee named Jesus. In the middle of the night his parents were warned of coming danger and they fled south to Egypt. Their situation was much better than many of the current refugees because their trip was financed by the men who came to see the new king and unwittingly started the assault by asking the wrong people where to find Him. Who knows how many little boys were murdered by that awful king who was so afraid of his throne being taken by a new king that he thought nothing of killing little boys. I am saddened to say that in two thousand years mankind is still just as evil as back then. So when I see the nativity scene, this year, I will think of all the innocent people, especially the children, suffering and remember Isaiah 53 telling of the suffering Savior.

Isa 53:2 For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

Isa 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isa 53:4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted....

Our culture has turned the celebration of the birth of our suffering Savior into the most lucrative shopping season of the year and now instead of just Black Friday we have ads touting "Thanks **Getting** Day". The gift giving idea was to represent the gifts given by those Wiseman to the new born King Jesus. Today most of us Christians just go along with the craziness of gift giving so not to disappoint or upset the folks around us. Giving to those who cannot return the gift would better express the Wise Men's gifts. If we are really going to celebrate gift giving as the Wise Men modeled it maybe we should be giving a goat to a family in a drought stricken area of Africa or donating to help put a well in a village with no clean water. I know many are concerned about today's refugees being a threat to our safety here in the United States so maybe, like the Wise Men of old, we can help finance a small portion of their struggles to escape the powerful men in high places who wish them harm. All this can be done with a Christian witness and I think that would be pleasing to God.

I hope your Christmas this year somehow will be different, with a stronger emphasis on the spiritual importance of gift giving.

Thank you for all your gift giving to Alpha this year!

Merry Christmas!

Richard & Debi

*For unto Us,
a Child is born...*

