

December, 2023

Dear Friends,

As we think of the celebration of Christ's birth sadly we can be caught up in the stress and pressure to "fit in with society!" The focus now is on gift giving, toy drives so children can have a gift, and financial pressure can be great! I heard on the news that 'experts' say the average US family will spend nearly \$1000.00 this year on celebrations at Christmas. Walking through stores we see that there is no emphasis on the birth of Jesus.

So my goal this year is to focus on how much love God had for us that He would come and be a human for a while! Today, in my devotions, I read from Jonathan Cahn's book, The Book of Mysteries, and it has help me to realize some of what God sacrificed to be one with His creation.

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....a scene from Scripture, from Bethlehem. Can you fathom the miracle of it? The God who created the universe, now a helpless baby inside the universe He created . . . the Almighty became the weakest of beings . . . the hands that stretched out the heavens now too weak to even grasp the hand of His mother . . . the eyes that see all things now can barely focus . . . the mouth that spoke the universe into existence now can only offer up the cry of a helpless baby. How amazing is that? It is the miracle of love . . . the humility of love . . . This will be my meditation as I think about the Savior's birth this season!

As we close another year at Alpha please continue to pray for the work here. The problems and anxiety created by our culture do not exclude Christians from heartache and family problems. You would be shocked by some of the stories I hear! Also, the stress in the culture has affected many people's finances so we are seeing more people who are struggling to provide basic needs. Thankfully, Alpha still has no fees for our help. I recently had several people contact Alpha, one referred to Alpha by a counselor, and another from their church because they can not afford the high fees being charged.

So my prayer for you is that you will focus on our Savior first and foremost and then enjoy family and friends as we see the new year coming. Thank you so much for your prayers and financial help that give hope to many people.

Richard.

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