



# The Christian Connection™



VOLUME 4 NO. 9 December 2007

*A Quarterly Newsletter from Christian Resource Network, Inc.*

**SOARING COMMUNICATION FOR CHRIST**

## The Real Meaning Of Christmas

By: Joan M. Blake



The holiday season is a time of excitement. As merchants capitalize on profits by offering sales on merchandise, people rush to various stores and outlets to purchase their last minute gifts for family and friends. Customers stand in long lines waiting to pay for their goods at the registers. They leave crowded parking lots in slow motion and anxiously proceed to busy highways on their way home. At home, they convert their purchases into beautifully wrapped gifts.

Alas, the long-awaited moment is here and families and friends exchange gifts as tokens of their love and appreciation for one another. They have dinner together and share in the laughter and joy of the season. Toys are scattered everywhere as children play with them for the first time until the novelty wears away. Adults are happy as they receive their special gifts. The evening comes to an end and everyone goes back to his or her daily routine the following day, sharing with others what he or she received for Christmas.

Some people are so busy during holiday time that they do not stop to think about the real meaning of Christmas, or how they can make a difference in the lives of the poor.

We celebrate Christmas to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and His gifts of joy and hope that He brought to the world by His coming. The Gospel according to Luke records how Mary gave birth to Jesus in a stable at Bethlehem because there was no room for Him in the inn (Luke 2:7). An angel appeared before shepherds who were tending to their sheep and said: "Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people." (Luke 2:10 NASB).

Jesus left his heavenly home and came in the flesh to live among us. He died for our sins and rose again to afford us the hope of salvation and eternal life. While we were yet sinners, God showed His love to us through His Son, a love that we clearly did not deserve (Romans 5:8). This is the real meaning of Christmas.

Because God has rendered a free gift to us, through our contributions which go to provide food, clothing, or shelter, we can become instruments of His love to the poor around the world and to those among us. We can bring the light of the glory of God to the sick and the imprisoned.

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## The Christian Connection

The Christian Connection is published by the Christian Resource Network Inc., a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization whose main mission is to provide support to those who are experiencing emotional pain. Other related services include women's small group training and mentoring services.

If you would like to become a member of Christian Resource Network, Inc., make contributions, advertise in *The Christian Connection Newsletter*, or be on our email list, please contact the editor or visit our website.

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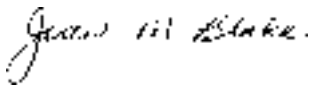
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Leah M Blake

When we serve God in this manner, the Lord promises to guide, strengthen, and provide for our needs. He says in Isaiah 58:11: "You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail."

May you have a wonderful holiday season and may you continue to have success in 2008.

In Christ,



Editor/Publisher



DR. JEAN DIMOCK

## WHAT DOES HABAKKUK'S PRAYER HAVE TO DO WITH US?

Oftentimes circumstances that are presented to us in our personal lives and in ministry seem impossible to deal with. Not only do we sometimes not know what direction to take with the difficulties we are faced with or how long we are going to have to face them, but we cannot understand why they are there in the first place.

This is true of Habakkuk's situation as well. Habakkuk shows difficulty in understanding why God permits evil to befall Judah without punishing the enemy Babylonians who were greater sinners than those in Judah. Would God really allow the Babylonians to destroy Judah? How did Habakkuk reconcile the difficulty he saw? Did he finally find peace in his circumstances? If so, how?

What does this have to do with us today?

Before Habakkuk's prayer in chapter 3, God assures him that there will be a solution to his difficulty. He also tells Habakkuk that His answers may seem slow in coming, but they will not delay, nor will they fail (2:3). He also reminds Habakkuk that it is the righteous who live by faith (2:4b). But in chapter 3 Habakkuk gives an example of how we as Christians should view our Sovereign Lord and every problem or difficulty in our lives.

Habakkuk's prayer of praise in chapter 3 includes rejoicing in who God is (vss. 1-3), His power (vss. 4-7), His purposeful deeds (vss. 8-16), and finally praise for God out of the faith he has in Him (vss. 17-19). Habakkuk's prayer is for a nation of people, a nation that God viewed as His own. He asked for mercy to be displayed in behalf of His people in his day. God knew of His own mercies even before Habakkuk reminded Him of them. God knew Habakkuk's faith in Him before Habakkuk lifted Him up. Habakkuk's ability to show all this to God built Habakkuk's faith.

No direct answer is given to the question of "why" the Lord would allow such an injustice. In response to the question of "how long," God said that it might "linger," but Habakkuk was to "wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay" (2:3b N.I.V.). While God told Habakkuk what He was going to do before Habakkuk prayed this timeless prayer, it is fitting that we be reminded of this again after the prayer. Did God do what He said He was going to do? Indeed He did, but in His time. Babylon finally met with God's judgment.

God works in our behalf whether we create our own difficulties or whether our problems are ones over which we have no control. We wonder how long we need to suffer through these situations, and sometimes why they are even there.

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We would do well to pray as Habakkuk did. Glorifying God in our prayers reminds us of who God is and what He is able to do. Determining to serve God, trust Him, and rejoice in Him, brings incomparable peace that can only come from a loving, holy God.

The God that Habakkuk served is the same Sovereign Lord we serve today. The God of promise before Christ came the first time is the same God of promise after Christ and will be the same God of promise in the yet to come. What He did for Habakkuk and His chosen people, He can and will do for us, His chosen people.

Jean Dimock received her D.Min. in Ministry in Complex Urban Systems from Gordon-Conwell in 2005. Her research and thesis were in family violence. She and her husband are looking forward to moving from NH's seacoast to MA in the very near future where Jean's plans are to either join an already existing domestic violence non-profit or form one.

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## Women's Support Group

Are you experiencing emotional pain from the stress of life or feel mentally drained from caring for a loved one? Please email me if you are interested in being part of our bi-weekly support group. Our bi-weekly meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of every month at a location to be announced.

**Email: [JBlake@christianresourcenetwork.org](mailto:JBlake@christianresourcenetwork.org)**

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## Women's Monthly Breakfast Series

Come and be a part of an educational and fun discussion group! We will grow in Christ as we embrace who we are as women and understand our purpose.

**Email: [Jblake@christianresourcenetwork.org](mailto:Jblake@christianresourcenetwork.org)**

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## Do you need prayer?

**Email**

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