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Dear Friends,

Christmas! *How quickly this year seems to have passed. Where has it gone? And what does the New Year hold in store for us, you may well ask? Well, we don't know where it has gone, nor do we know what 2013 holds in store, but we do know 2012 is now part of our history. And that word brings me to my subject of discussion with you for this month. History; or **HIS-story!** It's **Christmas**, and time for the **greetings** like this one:-*

*Down through the ages
The story is told
Of angels and shepherds
And wise men of old.
Of the child who was born
On that first Christmas Day
In a time long ago
In a land far away...*

*The story recalls
All the joy that He brought,
The peace that He gave
And the message He taught,
And may the same message
So old, yet so new;
Be the source of true joy
And contentment for you.*

*O night divine, O night
When Christ was born!
O night, O night divine.*

*As I received the first of my Christmas greetings in the post, I pondered the question that I guess many might ask; **why was He born on that first Christmas morn?** And why do we celebrate His birth, with our various traditional rituals, as diverse as our human, cultural mosaic? I have recently finished reading through the book of Isaiah, and as I*

got to the end of that wonderful story, I read these few verses in *The Message*; as are all of my scriptures in this month's letter to you; from that same version.

Isa 65:17 "Pay close attention now: I'm creating new heavens and a new earth. All the earlier troubles, chaos, and pain are things of the past, to be forgotten.

*Isa 65:18 **Look ahead with joy. Anticipate what I'm creating:** I'll create Jerusalem as sheer joy, create my people as pure delight."*

Now, that got me a little excited, to think that, way before the crucifixion, God had told His people **what they could expect, and what they could look forward to**. So, now that we are two thousand years removed from the crucifixion, we have the ability to look back at **history**, and the story we read in His word, and ponder the promises He made; ...to those who love Him; ...to those who are called according to His purpose! We can understand why we remember with amazement, that first Christmas morn, and celebrate the future promises, yet to be fulfilled; just as did those wise men and shepherds, long ago. And then we read on in the next chapter, **exactly what He came for...!**

Again we read from *The Message*...

Isa 66:1 GOD's Message: "Heaven's my throne, earth is my footstool. What sort of house could you build for me? What holiday spot reserve for me?

*Isa 66:2 I made all this! I own all this!" GOD's Decree. **"But there is something I'm looking for: a person simple and plain, reverently responsive to what I say."***

Yes, that is why He was born!!! He was looking for **YOU!!!** (verse 2), and me! And, funny enough, He was looking for us, long before we were even aware of His presence, as verse 11 of Ephesians chapter 1, says...!

*Eph 1:11 It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. **Long before** we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, **he had his eye on us**, had designs on us for glorious living,*

Eph 1:12 part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.

*Eph 1:20 All this energy issues from Christ: **God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven,***

*Eph 1:21 in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, **but forever.***

Eph 1:22 He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church.

*Eph 1:23 The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. **The church is Christ's body**, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.*

*And, there's the other exciting piece of information. Jesus was born, for the sole purpose of your **redemption**, and now God says He is in charge of everything, and the church, which is His body (verse 23); and if you and I know Him as Lord of our life, **we are the church**, and **are filled with His presence**. How awesome is that! If that isn't worth **Christmas greetings**, I don't know what is!!! Romans chapter 8 has some awesome words for us to end this letter, and again, read from *The Message*.*

*Rom 8:29 God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. **We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him.***

*Rom 8:30 After God made that decision of what his children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, **gloriously completing what he had begun.***

*Rom 8:31 So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, **how can we lose?***

Rom 8:32 If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us?

Rom 8:33 And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God's chosen?

*Rom 8:34 Who would dare even to point a finger? **The One who died for us—who was raised to life for us!—is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us.***

*Well, what a way to end the year!! What a promise! What a Saviour! **What a worthy reason for Seasons Greetings and Celebrations, of that wonderful birth, on that first Christmas morning.** That's why He came! That's why He was born, and that's why we remember!*

***It was for US, He came!!!** Amen and Amen!*

So put the problems of 2012 behind you, and gladly, willingly, grab hold of the hand of the one who came for you; **...who died for you; who rose again for you, and redeemed you back to Himself in the process, and who sits now in the presence of God, sticking up for you** (verse 34). **Praise the Lord!**

That's the best Christmas greeting gift you will ever get; eternity with Jesus..!

*The child who was born
On that first Christmas day,
In a time long ago
In a land far away...!*

*Till next month
From my house to yours
Blessings of the abundant kind!*

Leila Nord.

