

CRIBB<S>NOTE – DECEMBER 28, 2008

Sometimes it is hard to see the beauty of the day. We can miss the raindrops or spray of sun rays. In our busy lives, it is sometimes hard to listen to the gentle laughter that surrounds us. There are gifts spread about us that we never fully enjoy. Unfamiliar faces and strange patterns of people who arrived recently from distant lands dance and frolic even as they toil in our midst, but too often we don't see them.

New born babies come into the world with their first screams and cries. Some have names; others are given numbers; they all belong to God. We don't have the ability to predict what they will become. Even the infant who is part of a family that provides every possible means for a 'successful life' cannot be assured of a precise path. So it is also true for the baby born into circumstances guaranteed to present struggle and hardship, we have no way of knowing what will become of that child.

That is the story of Jesus' birth in the humble surroundings of a barnyard scene. His parents were migrants far from home on a journey to comply with the dictates of a brutal tyrant. They did not have the wherewithal to demand services; they could not afford sufficient healthcare at the time of labor and delivery. Jesus was not born into the royal family. Fortunately, he was born into a faithful family who did not depend on the body of evidence to determine their destiny.

Faithful and obedient, Jesus' parents kept the law and customs of their faith. After his birth, they carried their son to the priest for circumcision and blessing. They made their way to the temple to offer their only child to God. When they arrived and met the priest, they were amazed by what he said about their son.

Simeon, the priest, was an old man who had prayed to live long enough to see the Messiah. When Joseph and Mary presented Jesus, Simeon lifted his eyes to God with gladness and thanksgiving because he was confident his prayers had been answered in the person of the little baby Jesus.

We never know when, where, or how God will hear us and respond to our greatest needs and desires. The world needed salvation. The people of faith had prayed for liberation. Jesus came as the long-awaited gift.

What do you pray for today? Can you see Christ? Have you given your life to God and presented yourself like Mary and Joseph gave their son to God?

We are not babies anymore. So, what has become of the innocent child born to your parents those years ago? What will become of our children?

We have been given models of faithful living for us to follow and emulate. When we do, we place our trust in God and we open our eyes and hearts to see the gifts of God's magnificent array.