

Christmas Eve, 1992

The Zeal of the Lord of Hosts will do this.
Isaiah 9:7

Tonight we need to think back in time - before our democracy, before cars and airplanes, before electricity and indoor plumbing - to a time when a kingdom was like a family, and all awaited the birth of the new king with joyful anticipation and expectation.

And the king is born - we hear the borning cry of the baby, while we are all huddled together in the adjoining room, not daring to make a sound, and just waiting for that first new living cry! The father and midwife come out of the birthroom, as if they are coming from another world. "The mother and the baby are fine." they say with great relief. And the little one is there:

and the kingdom will be on his shoulders - and his crown names are Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace★ -

whom we know as Jesus.

But let's return from this intimate little kingdom of Antiquity to our own world this night, and realize that this birth is still the one who is born for our world and for all of us living in it. Born for people here in the Bay Area in El Cerrito, Richmond, Albany, Vallejo, (names I have just recently gotten to know and love) New York, San Francisco, Massachusetts, New Mexico and Mexico - Central America, as well as Latin America, Somalia and Africa, South Korea, India and Pakistan. Not only Asia, but Eurasia, the Far East, Near East...all the four corners of this world.

This little one is born for all the people living on this planet Earth. And his love, which is in the strong love of God, can draw us all together into the proverbial global village - because he is not only king over all the nations in the world, but through all time - all the yesterdays and all tomorrows yet to come, he reigns over his people, the Right Hand of God.†

There is certainly cause for rejoicing. The strain, anxiety,

★In the case of Egypt, usually five throne names were given emperors, four at accession and one at birth. The Pharaohs received a Horus name, Two Ladies name, Golden Horus, Prenomen and Nomen. In the case of the Pharaoh Raamses II: Usermaatra-Setepenra(t) Ramsès (meryamun, i.e., Beloved of Amun) II. (From Stephen Quirke, Who Were the Pharaohs? (London: British Museum Publication, Ltd., 1990) pages 10 and 63. "Raamses" means "son of the God, Ra". A comparison of some of these imperial throne names with these of Isaiah would be instructive.

†"The Right Hand of God" is moving in our land: Hymn no. 50 in Songs of Zion.

tension that all felt, holding their breath - until the morning cry of the baby - all broke into rejoicing, when word came that the mother and baby were doing fine, and a new little being had entered the world.

And then there was rejoicing: like at the time of a great harvest, or the time when the children open up their Christmas presents, or when the trucks laden with bags of wheat pull into a starving village in Somalia, or when the homeless form a line to receive a wonderfully home-cooked Christmas meal. What rejoicing!

What words do we have to capture this rejoicing? The heavens have to burst open and the angels have to descend and ascend in cascading crescendos of rapture "in excelsis" rejoicing.

When Mary found the stable with Joseph,♥ and brought forth that Christ child, that first born, that one who is promised from of old, to be the future king -

the celebrations the Father began, the party He threw with the angels, burst the boundaries of heaven,★★ and the shepherds caught a glimpse of the heavenly festivities -

And father Jacob's dream, Jacob's ladder dream, with angels ascending and descending upon it, came true that night,†† because the promised one was born.

And the angels proclaimed the birth to the shepherds, they witnessed the marvelous holy child with its mother, and turned into pastors, telling everyone the Gospel,♥♥ Good News, of the Son born of God.

It was the zeal, the ardor, the holy fervor of God for his creation did this. God created the world and it had fallen. In holy love, God came into his creation to lift it back into its original innocence, blessedness and sinlessness.

God caught hold of this Earth in free fall, turned it around, and lifted it back up, by the holding and uplifting,

♥Lutheran Book of Worship: No. 74 "A stable Lamp is lighted, and straw like gold shall shine...."

★★The Father in heaven threw a party for the angels to celebrate the new born Son.

††The dream that Father Jacob had in Bethel with the angels ascending and descending on a ladder came true that night over the shepherds' fields in Bethlehem.

♥♥The shepherds heard it from the angels. After they witnessed the Christ child in the manger, and the Holy mother Mary, they became the pastors of the new covenant called to proclaim this Gospel. Therefore we now have pastors as opposed to priests who are appropriate to the old covenant. (From Rudolf E. M. Krey)

ascending powers of heaven.★★★

Because heaven is where God is - and God's birth in Immanuel††† spells a capture of this world by the powers and forces of heaven.♥♥♥ These powers and forces are faith, hope, love, justice and all the harbingers of peace and fulfillment, the touchstones in our heart of our deepest human needs, which are divine.★★★★

So as we gaze upon what the zeal of the Lord of Hosts has done, when we see the birth of the one who leads heaven's great conquest of this sorry Earth, when we see the Earth and all its nations become engulfed in the forces of heaven - and time turn back to the garden of delights,†††† where frolic Adam and Eve in the new light of Christ,

the light of the new creation: ♥♥♥♥

we can translate an old German carol anew:★★★★★

★★★The Fall by Adam and Eve brought original sin. The Ascent worked by Christ brought imputed righteousness, that overcomes original sin.

†††The Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, a virgin is with child and will bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel, that means: God is with us. (Isaiah 7:14)

♥♥♥The Lord of Hosts is accompanied by the powers and forces at his command.

★★★★The hunger of the heart, the thirst of the soul: our deepest human needs are divine.

††††The Garden of Eden means the Garden of Delights.

♥♥♥♥the redemption in Christ is recreation, recapitulation, turning back time because "In the beginning was the word." Jn.1:1

★★★★ Heut schleusst Er wieder auf die Tür
zum schönen Paradeis.

Der Cherub steht nicht mehr dafür,
Gott sei lob, ehr und Preis
Gott sei lob, ehr und Preis.

Again he unlocks and flings open wide today
The gates of beauteous Paradise;
The cherubim are gone away,
Glory to God let praises rise
the new heaven on Earth
is before our eyes. †††††

A sermon of Christmas revelations: ♥♥♥♥♥★★★★★

MERRY CHRISTMAS

and a

BLESSED NEW YEAR!

††††† In Lutheran Book of Worship No 47 Verse 6:
He is the key, and he the door
to blessed Paradise;
The angel bars the way no more.
To God our praises rise,
To God our praises rise.

♥♥♥♥♥ Every year God blessed Pastor Rudolf E. M. Krey with a new Christmas revelation. God gave this to him, among such family gifts of a can of some Half & Half tobacco, marzipan, and perhaps a pair of socks. ♥♥ records one of his Christmas revelations. Several of the others here are those of Pastor Peter D. S. Krey.

★★★★★ The format of this sermon follows a piece written by Martin Luther in 1526 called: "A Counsel on how a Stable Order should be projected for the Christian Community" or "A Consideration, about how in the present time Uprisings could be Calmed". Here Luther underscores insights reached in the body of his essay by repeating them in footnotes with asterisks and crosses.