

# Jesus: The Reason For The Season



## Do They Know It's Christmas?

**C**hristmas is here again! The season of sharing is back. Many have suddenly rediscovered kindness. Cards are exchanged, carols are held, but do people know what Christmas is?

Thousands are heading toward the beach; hundreds rush to the theatres and tens to crusades; but is it Christmas yet for all?

Yes, Christmas is a season of love. No wonder churches are wearing new looks. Interior decorators are smiling to the banks due to a surge in patronage. Many are decked in new clothes, with shoes to match, but are they reconciled to the idea of Christmas yet?

Many have turned the anniversary of the first Christmas to eating large dinners; no wonder youngsters parade the streets looking for opportunities to eat free meals. But do they know it is Christmas?

That unresolved quarrel between you and your partner, or the stand-off between you and your boss in the office, is still left hanging, yet would you say it is Christmas?

Dear Christian friend, how many persons have you told the truth about Christmas, that Jesus came to save us from sin? Are you unconcerned if the world should perish, and still, you want to say it is Christmas?

Now consider the angels: When Jesus Christ was born at the first Christmas, the angels surveyed the whole wide world for people to share the good news with. They found shepherds in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

(Continued on page 2)

**C**hristmas presents the world with its unique touch. It is a celebration of Jesus Christ, the One Who has been, and is, and shall reign for ever more. It is a time to rejoice, a time to share, and an opportunity to worship. The festivities bring to mind the question: "What can man do without Jesus?"

Apostle John put the mystery of Jesus succinctly:

*"IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:1,14).*

In Revelation, the same John presented a graphic description of Jesus before His incarnation. A clarion call had gone out in Heaven: 'Who is worthy to redeem mankind from the way of sin?'

The weight of the call was heavy. It was fearful enough for anyone to utter a word. There was silence in Heaven. At creation, three Beings were present. It was only Those present that knew the nature of man. Besides, answering the call required absolute humility. Imagine, a top

echelon Being, volunteering to be crucified on the Cross, to die like a common criminal!

The 'Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world' was well qualified to scale the hurdles. He seemed specially made to offer the Supreme Sacrifice, that man may be redeemed.

At the height of the silence in Heaven came the respite, **"And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed"** (Revelation 5:5). Jubilation followed in a moment. The Elders and the Beasts passionately chorused, **"Thou art worthy."**

In this fashion, Jesus willingly surrendered His life, relinquished albeit temporarily, His majesty to come into the world as a Babe, to die for sinners; as a Sinless Being dying for a sinful world, thereby completing the work of redemption.

The fall of man had been a sore point in man's relationship with God. Man, who was created in the image of God, to worship, adore and proclaim the Excellency of his Maker, went the way of sin. By the transgression in the Garden of Eden, man lost the image of God. His nature so degraded in a drastic way that he unwittingly

(Continued on page 3)



Jesus at the temple on the 40th day

## FROM THE AFRICA OVERSEER

**A Gift Above All!**

***“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).***

Christmas, the season of giving is here again. It is an anniversary that has no comparison, in terms of its universal acceptance and the joy it gives.

Jesus Christ is God's special Gift to mankind: to save man from his sins; prepare him for a Home above and strengthen him across the landscape of life. As you send gifts to your loved ones and acquaintances, would you spare a thought for the Greatest Gift from the Greatest Giver?

Imagine how few the number of people that accept this Gift! Think about the opportunities many reject on a daily basis, even when there is room for all! To reject a gift, especially sent from a heart full of love and with the best intentions, could be hurting indeed.

What would you do with Christ? Would you let Him save you from sin, thereby making Heaven your Eternal Home, or reject Him, with dire consequences? The choice is yours.

*P. O. Akazue*

*(Continued from page 1)*

***“And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.***

***“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.***

***“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:9-11).***

The shepherds acted on the information supplied them by the angels as they immediately sought after Jesus, moments after the angels departed:

***“And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.***

***“And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child” (Luke 2:16, 17).***

The visitors from the East were described as wise men because

they did not waste time in acting on the prompting that the Redeemer was born. The secret behind the blessings that attended the first beneficiaries at the birth of Jesus was that they acted promptly.

The Bible presents us with a grand example of a high level of preparedness:

***“And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him” (Luke 2:25).***

Simeon's preparation qualified him for the Holy Ghost's revelation; for it was revealed unto him that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. No wonder, when he eventually sighted Jesus Christ, his song was:

***“Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:***

***“For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,***

***“Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;***

***“A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32).***

There was also Anna, a prophetess. She was of a great age, a widow of about fourscore and four years. She was used to praying night and day. When she heard of Jesus, she spoke of Him to all of them that looked for redemption in Israel.

Christmas is about redemption. Dancing, jumping up and down, wining and dining are not the focus. To benefit fully from the celebration, our hearts must be tuned towards Heaven, because it is only God Who can satisfy the yearnings in our hearts.

Jesus is still pleading that man must necessarily be transformed and receive a renewal in righteousness and true holiness, to be saved. This will require your observance of the seven ‘excepts’ in the Bible:

- “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).
- “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3).
- “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).
- “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).
- “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (John 6:53).
- “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20).
- “Except ye abide in me...He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15: 4,5).

You can measure your level of discernment of the knowledge of Christmas by subjecting your relationship with Jesus, the Center of Christmas, to the ‘dos’ and ‘don’ts’ of God. Then you can be sure, whether you know it is Christmas or not.



*(Continued from page 1)*

despised and set at naught, the precepts of God.

God, in sundry times, had manifested Himself to man through the supernatural interventions in the works of nature: the flood as it was in the case of the generation of Noah; famine as in the days of Elijah; warfare as in the experience of the Children of Israel; miracles as in the parting of the Red Sea, or the crossing of River Jordan by the Children of Israel, but man remained insensitive.

God also sent prophets like Abraham, Moses, Ezra, Habakkuk, but man would not hearken. From simple transgression by the first man Adam, Cain his son, went into cold-blooded murder. Soon came rebellion by the entire offspring of Adam at the Tower of Babel. On and on, the whole of mankind has been in bondage to sin, slave to Satan, and doomed to suffer the second death.

Hardened as the heart of man is, God found a maiden named Mary, who was holy enough to harbour His Seed for the nine months. This virtuous maiden remains a testimony to the world that a human being can retain his sanity in the midst of a sinful world. This maiden was betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter.

God eventually sent an angel to convince Joseph not to fear taking unto him Mary **"For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."**

The angel added:

**"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).**

The holy conception was indeed a fulfillment of a prophecy of the Lord by Isaiah that:

**"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).**

The prophet Isaiah gave an insight into the mission of Jesus Christ, years before He was born:

**"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.**

**"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will**

**perform this" (Isaiah 9:6,7).**

This two-pronged prophecy had been fulfilled in part. The second part will be fulfilled, beginning from the Millennial Reign. God also gave insight into where Jesus was to be born:

**"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).**

This prophecy was literally fulfilled in Matthew 2:1, just as His coming from the tribe of Judah was a fulfillment of the prophecy of God in Genesis 49:10:

**"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."**

The essence of His coming was to connect man with Heaven, such that he could be saved (his sins forgiven), healed, live happily on earth, and have a hope to be in Heaven someday.

In several ways, He demonstrated that He was the **Good Shepherd** (John 10:11), **The Way, The Truth and The Life** (John 14:6), and **The Door** (John 10:9). Many shunned the glories of His coming. They were argumentative, despising that which was good, and were murderous in their inclinations.

For those who came to Jesus, He showed mercy.

**"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psalm 34:18).**

Jesus' only regret was that man was not willing to be delivered from bondage:

**"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40).**

This scenario reveals what a hard task it is, even for an infinite Power to save the guilty from the consequences of sin.

Jesus came to give hope to the hopeless, joy to the forlorn and sorrowful, and an abundant life in God for all.

Can any afford to reject the Hope of all Ages?

Jesus endured the hardship, humiliation and sufferings, even though He did not commit any sin. He humbled Himself that sinners could come to their senses, seek God and through His Blood, whosoever will, might be saved.

In the midst of the celebration of His birth, the best anyone can give Jesus this season, is to allow Jesus to dwell richly in one through the born again experience. The process is simple: acknowledge your sins, confess and renounce them, then plead the Blood of Jesus for pardon. If you are sincere, Jesus will come into your heart, cleanse and make you ready for the Eternal Home. Then, you will be able to sing:

**Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,  
Born to set Thy people free,  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Let us find our rest in Thee.**

**Israel's strength and consolation,  
Hope of all the earth Thou art;  
Dear Desire of every nation,  
Joy of every longing heart.**

**Born Thy people to deliver,  
Born a child and yet a king,  
Born to reign in us for ever,  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.**

**By Thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all-sufficient merit  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.**



**Wishing You a  
Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year**

# newsl ine

## Joy Floods Ghana

Two weeks of prayer meetings and physical preparations preceeded the 2007 camp meeting at the campground, Aplaku Hill, Ghana, from Sunday, September 2 to 16. An atmosphere of joy pervaded the campground.

Foreign guests included the Africa Overseer, Brother Paul Akazue and his wife, Jane; the District Overseer of Abia State, Nigeria, Brother Dealyn George and his wife, Nne; the Overseer of The Republic of Benin, Brother Hounmenou Marcellin, and many brethren from Nigeria. Delegates also attended from The Republic of Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, as well as from all parts of Ghana.

Each week, Bible Teachings were held in the mornings from Tuesday to Friday. The topics included: **The Foundation of Christian Experience; Qualifications for Heavenly Citizenship; Consecration and Vows; Christian Forgiveness; God's Perfect Will; Why Christians Suffer; Warning Against False Teachings; and Tithes and Offerings.** These teachings inspired people to live holy lives, that will enable them to be used by God to draw many souls, who are in darkness to His marvellous light.

Many people testified to the goodness and grace of God. An epileptic man who came to the camp, suddenly started to have more frequent seizures. The ministers of God prayed for him and he was encouraged to pray through to salvation. God saved and sanctified him and he was completely healed of the dreadful disease. He returned home singing praises to God.

Statistics from the Information Centre indicated that 84 people were

saved, 42 sanctified and 24 baptised with the Holy Ghost and fire. Forty people were healed of various sicknesses and diseases.

## Edo District Organises Youth Rally

The Edo District Headquarters of The Apostolic Faith, Benin City, organised a youth rally on Monday, October 1, 2007.

The District Overseer, Brother S. A. Asaya, led the participants in an indepth discourse of an article published in the Higher Way, Volume 99 No. 3. The article, titled *"Leaving a Spiritual Legacy,"* is the personal experience of a person who, during her youth, had the privilege of growing up under the guidance of godly parents. They did not only serve God faithfully, but totally surrendered their will to Him.

Concerned about passing the spiritual legacy to the succeeding generation, she enunciated nine steps. These include having a genuine up-to-date experience of salvation, regular study and honour for God's Word, persistent intercessory prayer for the coming generation, establishing moral values, incorporating spiritual principles into everyday living, and teaching the children by example.

The young people were inspired and they prayed fervently, consecrating their lives to God's service.

## Prison Visitation Yields Fruit in Cross River District

Owing to prevailing prayers, the gale of revival sweeping across Africa found root in Cross River District.

Prison visitation brought hope to many. Some of the inspiring testimonies from the in-mates are as follows:

A male in-mate said: "I was sentenced

to five years' imprisonment. On my first night in the prison, I started to pray. After serious prayers, God rolled away my burden and I was saved. From that day, I discovered that I no longer commit sin. Through the Word of God brought to us in the prison, Jesus has saved and sanctified my soul by His Blood."

A female convict said:- "I was condemned to death, but after hearing the Word of God here in the prison, I prayed and Jesus used His Blood to save me. He changed my verdict. After serving for 20 years, I am no more to die but to be released. Very soon I will go home to my people because God has set me free."

## Osun District Dedicates New Church



From a welder's shop at Ago Wande, Osogbo, in 1973, God raised a splendid edifice in a fashion that was really surprising.

The Osogbo work had gone through varied experiences since Brother Joseph Falade began a prayer meeting with six others in the welder's shop. A larger group moved to a cocoa store at Oke Baale, and later into a primary school in 1977. The big church project began in 1985.

Members of The Apostolic Faith in Osogbo and its environs were full of joy when the church was dedicated to the glory of God in 2007.



# Have You Ever Wondered

## *How Ilesa Branch Church Started?*

**T**he establishment of an Apostolic Faith branch church in Ilesa was the result of some children of God's genuine concern for the salvation of sinners. A few brethren, including Brother A. O. Oladunni, Sister Esther Ibikunle, Sister Nike Abe, Sister Adunni Ogunnaike, and Sister Funke Akintonde, had been worried about people's outward zealousness in religious services without being saved. In spite of their zeal, the people fainted in the face of the slightest adversity. This condition drew the saints to their knees.

In answer to their fervent prayers, God inspired the saints to begin regular prayer meetings and reading of The Apostolic Faith Sunday School quarterlies, church magazines, and tracts, in the sitting room of Brother A.O. Oladunni. That was in 1968.

In the same year, the first Africa Overseer of The Apostolic Faith, Rev. T. G. Oshokoya, visited Ilesa in the company of his Gospel team - Brothers Adisa Akinboye, Paul



Ibikunle, Julius Osidele and Sister Olive Dosunmu, on a missionary journey, during which a cottage meeting was held. The sermon by Rev. Akinboye was preceeded by a beautiful rendition by the Africa Overseer. From that day on, Bible study was regularly held, with Sister Ibikunle teaching until she left for the university.

The evangelistic work in the zone got a boost when on September 2, 1971, Sister Lydia Ojo got married to Brother A. O. Oladunni. From that time, visits were paid to the sick in the hospitals and the inmates of the city prison during the week. Invitees were also collected for regular Sunday services held at

Ikirun.

The gradual increase in the number of people transported from Ilesa to Ikirun, necessitated a consideration for the establishment of a branch church in Ilesa. At the directive of the then Africa Overseer, Rev. Oshokoya, Sister Lydia Oladunni rented a disused cocoa store at 2, Fagbola Road, Isokun Street, Ilesa. Prayer meetings were held there, while they continued to go to Ikirun for Sunday services.

It finally dawned on the members that God meant more than a prayer centre for Ilesa. They resolved to reconstruct the store to the standard of The Apostolic Faith Church.

On May 11, 1974, the building was dedicated at a service conducted by Rev. T. G. Oshokoya, assisted by Brothers Lucas Obakoya, T. A. Ogunnaike, Solomon Adegoke Akinola, Paul Ibikunle and M. A. B. Kunle. There, a mini-musical concert was presented by The Apostolic Faith Choir, led by Brother Victor

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Testimony of the Pioneer Pastor

### *From a Suicide Bid to a Victorious Life*

**I** thank God for the power in the Blood of Jesus Christ to redeem. Before I was saved from my life of sin, I was very miserable, because the sickness I was grappling with then defied all forms of medication. The trouble became so great that I was always putting on a thick cardigan, regardless of the climatic condition. My colleagues, in the then Western Region Ministry of Justice, were curious to know the kind of person I was. Having become tired of my life, I nursed the idea that one day, I would end the whole thing by committing suicide.

I thank God that in March 1966, a life-long solution came through a Christian brother, who was a co-tenant with me at Ibadan. Having keenly



watched the victorious life of Brother Samson, his invitation to me to attend his Church - The Apostolic Faith, Oke Bola, Ibadan - met the least resistance in me. I prayed through to the three Christian experiences without even remembering my sickness. I was healed instantly of the terrible sickness which had held me captive for long without praying about it at all.

It was a few weeks later that the Spirit of God inquired from me about the sweater, which had more or less become a common feature to identify me among the numerous civil servants in the Regional Secretariat. "The sweater is gone forever with the terrible sickness," I replied. The thought of suicide was also gone and replaced with the peace of God like a river in my heart, and robust health in my body.

Today, I have found in Jesus Christ, a Saviour; a Healer; a Comforter; a Confidant, a Master; a Provider; a Giver of meaningful life, and a wonderful Supporter in all spheres of my life. May His name be praised for ever more!

**Sister Lydia Mojinyinola Oladunni has since gone on to her reward**

# God Did It For Me

## Sinful Nature Changed



**T**he Lord brought me into the Gospel of Jesus Christ at The Apostolic Faith on my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Late Rev. Ikpmam O. Ikpmam gave me his personal testimony. He invited me to the Church on the previous Saturday, as I was smoking

by a street in Aba, Abia State on May 6, 1967. The next day being Sunday, I came to Church in the evening. The devil, however, did not allow me to stay through the meeting, as I was called out for someone who came to look for me. I could only return when the service was over. I was a Muslim then, though I was born into a Christian family. I knew my parents loved the things of God by their prayer life and actions, yet, I was a bad child.

One day, a song, *Christ Receiveth Sinful Men*, touched my heart. This made me surrender to Jesus and in a morning prayer meeting, the Lord saved my soul. There was an instant change in my life. As I was returning home that morning, I walked along the rail track. The joy in my heart did not allow me to hear that a local train, leaving Aba to Port Harcourt, was coming behind me, until people shouted at me to leave the track. That same day, I left for my village and started to make restitution. From then on, the desire to smoke cigarette and engage in other vices left me. I stopped bowing to worship before the sun-god. It was in The Apostolic Faith Church that the Lord taught me His Word and how to pray aright.

The Lord started to clean up my life. Later, He sanctified me, and on the last Sunday of 1968 camp

meeting in Lagos, I was baptised with the Holy Ghost and fire. Though I suffered very much during and after the civil war, the Lord kept me by His power. After many years as a job seeker, the Lord gave me a good job with the Ministry of Works in my State and later with the University. He gave me a Christian wife. We had no child for many years, but in God's own time, He gave us two biological children who love the Lord, and many spiritual children.

We have passed through the water and fire of affliction, but the Lord has been faithful. He healed my children who were once down with measles at the same period, with little or no hope of survival. God healed one of them of whooping cough and food poisoning, and rescued the two from armed robbers. He healed me of many sicknesses: acute malaria, hernia and hepatitis, which almost took my life. He healed my wife of cold and bronchitis. He has delivered me from many fatal accidents during missionary journeys. I thank God for prospering the Gospel work at Otop-Otop, the first Church I pastored. Though I came to the Gospel alone, now, many of my relations are with me, serving the Lord.

The Lord drew my heart to full-time service in His vineyard, but I struggled with the Spirit of God for about thirteen years. I finally yielded and resigned from the University where I was working in the Engineering Department, and gave my full time to the Lord. I have no regrets that I did. I thank God for the problems of the way and His grace that is always sufficient. I know one day I shall see His face in Glory. I have dedicated to Him all my life.

*Sylvester E. Ekpe is the Overseer for Cross River District*

(Continued from page 5)

### Have You Ever Wondered?

Okusanya. The then Owa Obokun of Ijesaland, His Royal Highness, Oba Agunlejika, and his prominent chiefs were in attendance.

Sister Lydia Mojinyinola Oladunni was appointed the pastor, while Sister Akomolede was appointed a Sunday School teacher. Rev. M. A. B. Kunle, who had a deeper knowledge of church administration, was posted from Ikirun to guide and assist the newly appointed pastor. Two-week evangelistic services followed the dedication of the new church. The church building was later bought from the owner.

In 1985, a parcel of land behind the church building was bought, where a decent children's hall was built in 1988. Eventually, three acres of land were purchased

along Ibala Road, off George Burton Memorial College, Ilesa. The parcel of land was meant for permanent church structures. Another parcel of land of about two acres was bought and is now being used as a cemetery.

Since the take-off of the church, many souls have been saved and many homes that were hitherto on the brink of collapse have been reconciled, to the glory of God. Although some of the pioneers of the work have gone on to their reward, the work they left behind has continued to expand.

*Ilesa is now a District Headquarters, with Reverend Oladejo Osunbunmi as the current Overseer.*



## Delivered from the Shackles of the Occult

Sometimes, I am at a loss when I think of the compassion of Jesus that led me, the vilest sinner, to the Cross. I was a typical wretch that would have ended in hell, but the grace of God rescued me, when I seemed to be slipping dangerously into the abyss of perdition. It is unusual that a high-ranking herbalist would listen to the Word of life, let alone pray through to salvation. I became a chieftain, *the Otun Ekerin* of the *Awo* cult, in April 1986, and a member of an occultic traditional society for many years, before God in mercy, showered compassion on me.

After my secondary education in 1976, I proceeded to the Teachers' College. I taught briefly at Oke-Imesi, my home town. Unknown to many, my mission in the town was to get integrated into the mystic world. I interviewed many herbalists in the town. A year later, I moved to Jos, to work for a newspaper group as a circulation personnel.

Between 1982 and 1983, I got involved in electioneering campaign, and got acquainted with powerful politicians. By this time, I had been recognised as an upcoming herbalist and 'a master court- case quencher.' I also specialised in money- making voodoo.

After the 1983 elections, I came back to Ibadan and associated with powerful occult groups. It was there I discovered I still had more to learn. I later moved to Ajegunle, where I learnt from my uncle the use of oracles, and a lot more.

My successes in quenching court cases endeared me to drug peddlers and advanced fee fraudsters, and of course, big money making. I went deeper into occultism and made money. I then realised that I had gone very far from God.

It is surprising that, deep as I was in the wilderness of sin, God did not give up on me. On August 6, 2002, my younger brother and I were travelling home for an uncle's burial. Midway, my brother asked an important question: "Whom are you serving?" I told him, I was serving God; that I was a Muslim, a traditional worshipper and a Christian - "*trinity*." My brother noted with concern that I was in hell already. He told me that the meaning of Trinity is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. I laughed at his 'ignorance.' But I marvelled at his seriousness, for not quite long, we got to a palm wine joint and I asked that he should allow me take a few shots. He refused to pull up for me to drink.

On the return trip, my brother played a Christian cassette in his car radio. It was a sermon on *The Ten Virgins*. The preacher narrated the story with such emphasis that I was convicted. From that day, I became restless. A Voice kept asking me where I hoped to spend eternity. The Voice also charged me to choose between the different idols in my house and God. I became convinced that I must do something about my life.

One day, I called the woman living with me then, and told her that I might need to do away with my kind of work. She advised me to invite my younger brother, and this I did. He came with two reverend gentlemen with whom he

organised a prayer meeting in my house, singing and praying. At about 2am, I was asked to choose between voodoo and Jesus. I responded with the song: *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*. After the initial resistance, I eventually brought out the gods of iron, thunder, "baba agba," "ifa," "osun" and other idols from my house and they were burnt. It was after the exercise that I was able to sleep. My initial fear was: "How could I live, if my main source of livelihood was surrendered unto God?" But God is mightier than all my fears.

I initially joined a church, but as soon as the members noticed my wealth, they became envious. I felt dejected and the Spirit of God told me that that was not where He had directed me. I started praying, asking God where to go.

Not long after, the woman I then considered my wife went to a shop to buy fish. In the interaction that ensued, the woman selling the fish invited my family to The Apostolic Faith Church at Oke Aro, Ogun State, Nigeria. The following Sunday, my wife attended the morning service. She came back to invite me for the evening service. The service was really evangelistic. The same evening, I was saved, thus putting an end to my agonies and nightmares. I prayed long for sanctification, but could not get it until the 2003 camp meeting because God kept telling me: "I will give you, when you are ready." I prayed fervently during the camp meeting and one night, an Old Man, wearing a white flowing gown, tapped me and asked me to rise to my feet. He asked why I had been praying for several hours without being blessed. He exhorted me to stop praying for sanctification but for grace to make restitution of my marital life. Before then, I did not know anything about restitution. God spoke to me convincingly about how to make restitution of my past. Two days later, I was sanctified and was later endued with the Holy Ghost. Before long, God reconciled me to my rightful wife, while I detached myself from all the strange women parading themselves as my wives.

Many of my former clients thought I was mad to have dumped a very lucrative art. My testimony has always been that the joy of Heaven that I have in my heart, and the hope of eternal life that bubbles constantly in my soul, have coherently made something different in my life. Many of them had promised millions of naira to lure me back into that dirty and dangerous past, my decision to follow Christ till the end remains my resolve. Please pray for me.



**Moyinoluwa Adebawale worships at Oke-Aro, Lagos District of The Apostolic Faith Church.**

# From the Quarterlies

Excerpt from Sunday School Book 3

## JOSEPH, A TYPE OF JESUS

**A**s we commemorate the Birth of Jesus Christ this Yuletide and share in the joy that accompanies its arrival, it is important for us to have reflections on some of the sterling qualities in the life of Joseph and prayerfully pattern our lives accordingly. In all the vicissitudes of life, we find Joseph remaining true to God, a shining jewel in the midst of adversities and reverses, a light in a nation of darkness, and an example of patience such as is seldom found in any man.

An interesting thing about Joseph is that he is one of the few characters of whom a detailed account is given in the Bible, but of whom no fault is mentioned. We can say that in many ways, he is a type of Christ. However, Joseph was hated by his brothers, not only because of the parental favour shown him, but because the Lord gave him two dreams, which the brothers interpreted as showing that they and their parents would bow down in reverence to this younger brother. To some, it may seem that a lack of tact on the part of Joseph made his way hard; causing his brothers to envy, hate, ridicule and ultimately sell him as a slave to a caravan that was passing on the way to Egypt. However, God was directing Joseph's course in life and all this was a part of God's plan for His own chosen people, the Children of Israel (Genesis 45:5-8).

We find many parallels between the life of Joseph and that of our Lord Jesus Christ, from which we can draw some valuable object lessons to apply to our everyday lives. Some of these we shall attempt to mention here:

Joseph was a beloved son of his father, while Jesus was the Beloved Son of His Father. Both were obedient, even unto death (Psalm 105:17-24; Philippians 2:8). Both were the innocent persons whom their brethren sold for a few pieces of silver (Genesis 37:25-28; Luke 22:3, 4, 47, 48; Matthew 27:3-10). In Joseph's case this bargain (20 pieces of silver), was proposed by his brother, Judah (Greek **Judas**) the very namesake of that disciple and brother who sold his Lord and Master for 30 pieces of silver.

Joseph became the means whereby his brethren and a world of strangers could be saved from death. Jesus, through His betrayal and death, became the Lord and Saviour of His brethren (the Jewish people) and also a world of strangers to the covenant of promise. In other words, Joseph was a preserver of life, whereas Jesus is the Giver of Life.

Another interesting parallel is that both had someone

who tried to deliver them from their obvious fate. Reuben conceived a plan to deliver Joseph from the hands of his brothers; and Peter drew his sword to attempt a deliverance from the hands of the captors of Jesus. But both schemes failed, since they were merely the results of a natural man's well-intended reasonings. God's great over-all plan for His people depended upon a Joseph in Egypt and the well-beloved Son in a sinful world.



*Joseph before his brothers*

What a happy moment it was for Joseph when he could tell his brothers he loved them and that he had forgiven them for all the sufferings they caused him! How happy we are when we forgive someone who has wronged us, and feel the heavenly fellowship that comes when there is nothing between us and our brothers! Jesus is happy, too, to forgive the sinner who comes before Him in repentance; and the angels in Heaven rejoice with Him when a wandering child comes home.

The whole land must be implicitly obedient to Joseph if they were to be saved from the impending famine and death (Genesis 41:44). In the same vein, all mankind must be implicitly obedient to Jesus for their salvation (John 2:5).

Joseph loved the humble Hebrew herdsmen, who had come from Canaan, more than all the lords and ladies of the king's court in Egypt. The Hebrews were an abomination to the Egyptians, but not to Joseph. He had kept the love of God in his heart which overlooked all the faults in the lives of his brothers. Jesus expects His followers to love and be kind to everyone. When He was on earth He loved the poor, the weak, those whom no one else cared for; and He did good to them. He healed the lepers whom most people avoided. That love is still extended to all men; and He wants us to love the least of His little ones.

How wonderful is God's plan! How marvellously it is carried out and revealed to mankind! How interested God is in the welfare of men of every time and period in history, in that He sent encouragement to them through His blessed promises, covenants, examples, and prefiguring-types, that they might not be driven to despair but see, by means of them, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and be rescued from a devil's hell and an eternity of outpoured judgment.

Joseph, even though a mortal, was like Jesus. We could be like Him, too.