



O Come, All Ye Faithful

Who are the faithful?

For whom, or perhaps I should say to whom, did Jesus come ... and to whom does He come today? Jesus came to Middle Eastern sheep herders who lived in the desert. He chose to be born to an unmarried pregnant teenager. He spent early years of His life in Egypt, of all places, home of Pharaohs past and Arab haters of Israel present in His time and ours. In our post-9/11 world, knowing about the history and claims of what we know to be false religions, in a world where lovers of Jesus are very literally targets, does Christmas mean anything new?

Did Jesus come for Osama bin Laden?

Did angels sing of good tidings of great joy to the World Trade Center terrorists?

Did Mary bear a savior for Adolf Hitler, or Pol Pot, or Stalin, or Manson, or Jack the Ripper, or Slobadon Milosovic?

Let's move out of the headlines – did Jesus come to the gangbangers of East LA or the slum dwellers of Detroit or the loyal subjects of the Taliban or the cannibals or the communists or the Mafia?

Let's get a little more personal. Did Jesus come for that guy who stops you on Sunday mornings when you get off the interstate on your way to church, the one who smells bad and asks for money? Did Jesus come to that woman you have to meet every week in your business, the obnoxious one who has no interest in the things of God but has a great deal of interest in making your life miserable? Were the tidings of great joy for the mugger who took your wallet on your last trip north and for the mechanic who took your money but did not fix your car and then laughed at you when you complained?

Yes.

They may or may not become the faithful. But we did. Paul says, “and such were some of you.” We cannot forget that Jesus came to us, in our sin and our rebellion, too. What distinguishes us from those others is only a matter of degree, not a matter of kind, for we are all sinners.

Steven Vincent Benét's radio play *A Child is Born*, first broadcast on NBC in 1942, tells of the coming of the Christ child through the perspective of the wife of the innkeeper, the one whose stable served as maternity ward for Mary. Through her eyes, and through the eyes of her servant girls (maybe the original Jeannette and Isabella of the carol), we see how the nativity of the Son of God changed one person's perspective on treating everyone else. Through another character, a common dirty thief named Dismas, we hear of the countless others—called by Dismas the “vast sea of the wretched and the poor”—who wait to be touched by that child.

After the choirs of angels sang, dirty shepherds and rich foreigners mingled with the unmarried parents and the sheep around the manger.

He came because of who we are—sinners in need. Now we greet Him because He gives us something to be faithful in, the true God, the incarnate word of the Father.

He came because of who we are. Now we come because of who He is.

Come and adore.

Lyn Robbins
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