

Christmas by John Betjeman

Describing all the preparations, decorations, sights and sounds of Christmas throughout Great Britain in the 1950's, the poet asks a few poignant questions re: the true reason for all the fuss surrounding the advent season.

*And is it true, This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue, A Baby in an ox's stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea Become a Child on earth for me?*

Luke 18:31-34 Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time

³¹ Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³² He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; ³³ they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again." ³⁴ The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

- Zechariah 11:13 (30 pieces of silver); 12:10 (pierced); 13:7 (shepherd struck)
- Psalm 22 is a vivid description of the crucifixion of Jesus
 - The question: My God why have you forsaken me?
 - Scorned and despised by people
 - People mocking and urging him to call on the Lord to rescue him.
 - Bones are out of joint
 - Mouth is dried, tongue sticks to roof of mouth (dehydration)
 - Pierced hands and feet
 - Divide clothes and cast lots for garments
- Isaiah 53 is a vivid description of the rejection, torture, death, and resurrection of Jesus
 - Despised and rejected
 - Man of suffering and pain
 - Stricken (beaten) and afflicted
 - Pierced for transgressions
 - Crushed for our iniquities
 - Punishment brings us peace
 - By his wounds we are healed
 - Oppressed and afflicted and yet did not defend himself verbally
 - Died and buried in a rich person's tomb
 - Done no violence and no deceit in his mouth
 - The Lord's will was to crush him and cause him to suffer as a bodily offering for sin
 - Resurrection!

Luke 18:35-43 A Blind Beggar Receives His Sight

³⁵ As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶ When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷ They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."

³⁸ He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

³⁹ Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

⁴⁰ Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹ "What do you want me to do for you?"

"Lord, I want to see," he replied.

The Reason for the Season

⁴² Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.”⁴³ Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

- *Jesus asks, “What do you want me to do for you?”*

Luke 19:1-10 Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

- *Today salvation has come to this house.*
 - Exodus 22
- *The Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost!*

I Know No Other Jesus by James M. Gray

I know no other Jesus

 Than He who died for me;

The Savior of lost sinners,

 The Christ of Calvary.

I know no “ideal” Jesus

 That human minds invent;

The only Jesus Christ I know

 Is whom the Father sent.

That human christs could save me

 Is inadmissible;

My Jesus is the image

 Of God invisible.

My Christ is God incarnate

 And of the Virgin born;

He left a crown of glory

 To wear the plaited thorn.

The Infant of the manger,

 The village Carpenter,

The Teacher sent from heaven

 To men to minister;

The true historic Jesus,

 Who died and rose again,

He only is the Jesus,

 That I proclaim to men