

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

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“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:13, 14)

By the grace and mercy of the Almighty God, we are brought into another season and celebration of Advent. Advent gives us all the opportunity to reflect and to focus anew on the coming into the world of the Christ Child over two millennia ago. In celebrating Jesus’ coming to this earth, we are reminded of God’s boundless love, of His unspeakable gift, and of His divine plan of eternal redemption for fallen humanity. We are reminded also of the Word becoming flesh, of the incarnation of divinity and humanity via the Virgin Mary’s miraculous conception and birth of Jesus Christ. And so, at Advent, we share in good tidings, in great joy, and in hope, peace and good will among men.

However, paramount to our sharing and experiences of Advent must be our genuine acknowledgement of Almighty God for Who He is, that we might offer to Him the worship and praise that He rightly deserves. Contrary to the belief of some, Almighty God is not the big man. He is not the man upstairs, nor is He comparable to any personality in heaven or in earth. The Almighty God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, is the incomparable God. He is eternal, all wise, all powerful, self existent and omnipresent. God has no equal. He is God triune, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all by Himself. God is therefore to be esteemed, awed, respected and revered by all, at all times, and in all situations.

At the pronouncement of Jesus’ birth to the Judean shepherds, the angelic host praised God and said, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14) My friends, the celebration of this season of Advent is designed by God to be three dimensional in scope so as to bring into our reality the importance of relationship, worship and friendship. In that vein, Christmas time is therefore truly a good time to acknowledge God for Who He is and to enter into a personal and intimate relationship with Him.

Such a relationship will produce true worship of Him Who is the Most High God; Who resides and reigns in the highest heaven above. Yes, in our worship of Him, we can declare like the heavenly host, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14)

To many in our Bahamaland, 2011 has been a year devoid of the experience peace and good will. Indeed, it has been a year filled with stress, strife, distress, turmoil and violence of the most bloody and deadliest kind. Many are still trying to rebuild their broken lives following the ravages of hurricane Irene. The state of the economy, brought about by the global recession, continues to take its toll on many, including job seekers, home owners and businesses. Victims of violent crimes are reliving the emotional trauma of their most unfortunate and horrifying experiences. Family of murder victims are left groping about in the dark seeking answers to their unexpected fate in life. From a human standpoint, there seems to be little or no peace and good will toward men.

But despite your dilemma, friends, this season of Advent gives you and me the opportunity to enter into a new and fresh beginning. In your state or situation, acknowledge God for Who He is; and like the patriarch Job of old, in your trial and tribulation, worship God, engage God, and trust Him in all things to bring you out. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1)

Fellow Bahamians and friends, God is the God of perfect order. Some people desire peace and good will without having the experience of the peace of God in their lives. But, with God, it just does not work that way. With God, we first must love Him, praise Him, glorify Him, and serve Him faithfully, in order to have the capacity to love our fellowmen, to do good to them, and to be at peace with them. Holy Scripture reminds us, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” (Isaiah 26:3)

And so, friends, at this special time and season of the year, as Christianity rejoices in the awesome wonder of Jesus’ birth, may your heart join in the song and in the celebration of peace that He brought to earth. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14)

**MERRY CHRISTMAS BAHAMAS!!**