

**Come Make Us Whole**

Luke 2: 1-7 and 8-20

Isaiah 9:2-7

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**Luke 2:1-7**

**2** In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**Luke 2:8-20**

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,<sup>[a]</sup> the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,<sup>[b]</sup> praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the

manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

### **Isaiah 9:2-7**

<sup>2</sup> <sup>[b]</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup> You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>4</sup> For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

<sup>5</sup> For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup> For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it

with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

In the fullness of time, God sent God's only begotten son, that the world might be saved through him. The Hebrew Word for salvation and deliverance is Yeshua. But like with every word that's been translated, it has layers and nuances of meaning that do not neatly fit into one of our English words.

My Hebrew teacher was both delightful and wise. He taught in story, and so he drew us magnificently and curiously into the Hebrew language and culture. And when he got to this word, Yeshua, he painted pictures in our minds to help us understand the fullness of the word.

This word Yeshua is also a name. It is Joshua. But it can also be understood as the name Jesus. Messianic Jews call Jesus by the name Yeshua. Yeshua means deliverance and salvation. Jesus is our deliverance and our salvation. But the word means even more. Flowers brought to a meal, is yeshua. A long lost family member returned and seated around the table is Yeshua. A baby born into a family, is yeshua. Finding a job, after long searching is yeshua. Finding a church family you can call home, is yeshua.

Yeshua means deliverance. It is rescue. It is saving. It is salvation. And it is completeness.

Christ coming into our world, as a little baby is Yeshua. We know God the mighty. We have heard of how God parted the waters so the people of Israel could pass safely through. Scripture tells of how God stopped the sun in the sky so the people could be victorious in battle. We knew God the mighty.

We knew God the Holy. The one beside whom none of us can measure, before whom none can stand. This is why there were so many rules. This is why only the priests could enter the Holy of Holies... Even still, looking at just the facts, we feel the chasm between ourselves and God, between ourselves and the Holy, between ourselves and all that is good. We do not measure up.

But what we didn't know is to what depths our God would stoop, in order to lift us up.

We did not know that the same love that disciplined and corrected us in our waywardness was the love that would take on our sinfulness and shame, that we might be restored.

We did not imagine the God of the universe, creator of all the earth and all that is in it, stopping to rescue a single lost soul.

We did not know our God would battle all the evils of hell to bring us home.

We did not know our God was on the side of the desolate and oppressed.

We did not know our God would topple the high and lifted up while raising up the lowly and outcast.

We did not know the *fullness* of God's love for all creation!

Until, in this moment of vulnerability beyond imagination, God came as a tiny baby, to a teenage girl, unmarried at the time of her conception...

In every way, defying expectation,

in every way tearing down the idols and false imaginings we have made of God,

in every way removing the cancer of our egos,

we peer into a dirty feeding trough in a drafty stable and find...

*the One* able to smote us all with a single word,

*the One* able to condemn us for all we have done wrong,

*the One* who knows all and sees all,  
*that one*,  
before us,  
come to us,  
as a tiny child.

What love is this?!

Love that speaks truth over our injustice.

Love that makes right what is wrong.

Love that turns ashes into new life, mourning into joy, evil into goodness.

Love entrusting itself to us!...

Love that keeps on loving each us,  
*the doers of all this wrong and injustice*,  
with the love that makes us whole.

Christ has come. Yeshua! And in this presence of this One,

...peering in the manger

...listening at his feet

...feeding thousands with a few loaves and fish

...welcoming the children

...speaking with outcasts

...stunned in utter awe and relief as Jesus stops a raging storm,  
with just a word

...looking into his eyes, and experiencing his utterly unearned and illogical delight!?!?

...watching helplessly as the One who stopped a storm with his word allows himself to be beaten and humiliated, conquering sin and death and rescuing us from the grave.

What love is this!

And from the far reaches of our running, the depths of our sin and pain,  
the deep darkness of our endless nights, Christ has entered in and  
shone a great light...  
And made us whole.