

Saturday 21st December



*The Life-Light was the real thing: Every person entering Life he brings into Light.
He was in the world, the world was there through him, and yet the world didn't even notice.*
[John 1:9-10, The Message]

'The world didn't even notice'. If that isn't a line that tells us about the coming of Jesus into the world on that first Christmas, then I'm not sure what is! Although there were a few shepherds who crept down to Bethlehem, a choir of angels that sing of God's glory and a strange caravan of men from the east – for the rest of the world, nothing amazing happened that night. Most people didn't even know God had been born. Most didn't hear that baby crying, or see his mother try to calm him. Most weren't even aware of the blood, sweat and tears that brought God into the world. The world didn't even notice.

Perhaps that is also true today. Christmas lights and trees were going up in November, Christmas gifts have been in stores for months and Christmas records have been playing for weeks. People are rushing around, but amid the noise, festivities and wrapping – many don't even give a thought to the baby born in Bethlehem. Most don't even remember why Christmas is a celebration beyond food, drink and presents. The world no longer notices.

But for those of us who do notice, those of us who creep to the manger like shepherds, travel a long way to meet God or sing praises to celebrate his coming – we are gifted with the awe and wonder of Christmas. We should try to share this awe and wonder with others. There is one Christmas carol I urge you to spend time with this year: 'Beneath the paper wrappings there's an open stable door' (*Singing the Faith* 192) by Clare Stainsby reminds us that behind the busyness and fun of the Christmas season, there is a baby, God on earth, who has come to save us all.

Christmas God, Incarnate God, Emmanuel, God with us:
as we celebrate your coming among us,
may we recognise you amongst the tinsel and glittery paper;
may we find you in the food and the fellowship;
may we seek you in fun and celebrations.
As we celebrate your coming,
help us to notice you in our world.
Amen.