

**Holiday Reflection**  
**2012 Christmas and New Year's Holidays**

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As we approach the 2012 Christmas and New Year's holidays, all recognize the turbulent economic times that we are experiencing. The downturn has effected both the East and the West. An example was mentioned in Hiroko Tabuchi's article on the Japanese economy in the November 12<sup>th</sup> New York Times stating:

*The decline in gross domestic product came to an annualized 3.5 percent contraction. It was a reversal from Japan's robust performance earlier this year, when it outperformed most of its peers in the Group of 7 industrialized nations.*

Additionally, the west is on shaky ground too. Kiron Sakar states in his November 13<sup>th</sup> Wall Street Journal article:

*The euro-zone economy is deteriorating alarmingly... The severe austerity measures have impacted Greece, Spain, and Portugal in particular (Ireland has stabilized and there are positive signs in Italy), though core euro-zone countries, such as France and even Germany, are now affected.*

Many ask, *Is there any hope?* Yes there is hope! We should reflect on this hope during this holy season.

**First, God's compassion is shown and revealed during Christmas.**

We know that God cared enough that He sent His Son for our redemption. ...He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people (Luke 1:68b). The phrase *He has visited us* in the original Greek was the word *episképtomai*, which comes from *epí* (upon) and *sképtomai* (to examine closely, inspect, observe). Here it means that God looked with mercy, favor, and regard. His care and compassion is shown through His action.

**Second, in the Christmas season He has provided redemption.**

In the second part of Luke 1:68b we see that "*He has...accomplished redemption:*" *poieō* (which means to do something) and *lutrōsis* (which means to deliver, to release). He has provided for our delivery through His redemptive power.

**Third, Christmas shows how faithful our God is to us.**

Within the Old Testament, Micah 5:2 predicts the birth of Christ. This prediction is fulfilled as stated in the New Testament: "As He said through His prophets long ago" (Luke 1:70). We can easily see that God is faithful and keeps His promises now and throughout the ages.

**In conclusion, we should recognize that God is here with us and cares for us.**

Christmas clearly shows God's compassion, His salvation, His faithfulness to His promises, His purpose and compassion for His people. Yes, economic times are difficult. Yet, we are not alone. We have a God Who has kept His word to us over the ages. He will also care for us during these hard economic times. "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" (Mathew 6:26). So during this holiday season, remember that God knows us, cares about us and is with us, even when economic times are tough. Make certain to share with those in need during this season as we celebrate God's gift of His Son to humankind.