

## Let's Celebrate: God Has Kept His Promises!

The time is getting closer, and it seems every family is looking forward to purchasing, setting up, and decorating their own Christmas tree!

A story is told that Martin Luther, one night before Christmas, was walking through the forest, and looking up at the stars shining through the tree branches. It was such a beautiful sight that he went home and told his children it reminded him of Jesus, who left the stars of Heaven to come to earth at Christmas. This thought prompted him to cut down an evergreen tree and bring it into his house. It goes on to say, that he was one of the first to place lights or candles on his tree to represent the presence of the Light of Christ.

Other Christians looked at the triangular appearance of evergreen trees from afar and were pleased to have one of these trees because it reminded them of the Trinity.

Still others have suggested that just as a growing tree is cut down to its own death, and “grows back” to rise to splendor, Jesus died and rose again in glory. Some even started the practice of placing

gifts surrounding their trees as representative of the gifts God lovingly gave to us in the gift of His Son, namely, forgiveness, life, and salvation.

It is interesting to note that the prophet Isaiah in chapter 53, verse 2 says that the Messiah would grow from the stump of Jesse; also that “He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground; ...He was despised, and we esteemed Him not ...He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows ...the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him” (v.3-5).

The image of the growing tender shoot of a rose is also highlighted in the words of one of our Advent hymns, “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming.”

1. *Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung! Of Jesse's lineage coming As prophets long have sung, it came a flow'ret bright, amid the cold of winter, When half-spent was the night.*
2. *Isaiah 'twas foretold it, this rose I have in mind: with Mary we behold it, The virgin mother kind. To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Saviour, When half-spent was the night.*
3. *This flow'r whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air, dispels with glorious splendor The darkness ev'ry-where, True man yet very God, From sin and death He saves us And lightens ev'ry load.*

LSB #359

During this Advent/Christmas season, we rejoice in how God has

kept His promises for mankind. As foretold, He sent His only Son, born as a child, who became the Saviour of mankind. Yes, it is a reflection of Jesus' humble nature that He, like a seedling growing into a vine or great tree, would be cut down but later rise to live forever and also raise us up to live with Him. What a great God we have!

Let's celebrate!!

