**God’s Farsightedness (Romans 1:1-7)**

 God saw us and changed our life too when Jesus was being born.

 As we rejoice today in the birth of our Savior, which is celebrated on two dates within our Armenian Evangelical circles here in America, I greet you with the joy of the birth of the Christ-child wishing you good health, spiritual calm, and the tangible Accompanying Presence of the Holy Spirit. Congratulations also to those who bear the names Manoug (referring to Christ-child), Emmanuel, or other Nativity-related names. May God make the blessings connected with the meanings of those names come to pass in your lives.

 Today we are going to speak about the birth of Jesus as an act that had foreseen our current lives as well. In one word, Jesus birth was not only a sudden entrance of God into the world, but also and simultaneously, an event planned, ordained and ordered from the very beginning. Thus, today, we are going to see that purpose of His Advent – that holy yet unnoticed, glorious yet quiet Birth – affects us deeply as well. Again, God saw us and changed our life too when Jesus was being born. Let us talk, then, about how it is possible to say such a thing…

 The birth of Jesus was the beginning of God’s answer to your lost spiritual state. Despite the fact that the letter of Paul to the Roman Church begins with an overall summary of salvation and not the birth of Christ specifically, yet within those first seven verses, we find the ideas of predestination, pre-planning and fulfilled prophecy. The Apostle says, “which God promised beforehand.” In other words, God was already aware of and had chosen to save humanity from their sins with a glorious intervention. The Apostle says that God’s Gospel was already promised to humanity through the Old Testament Prophets – in other words, Jesus’ Advent was a thing planned long ago. Salvation had not been left up to chance or the free choice of man. The Apostle also remembers that Jesus’ birth was foreordained both physically to be from the line of David and destined to culminate in the power of the Holy Spirit in a Resurrection. All this defines both our and the Roman believers’ callings as those who obey in faith and are called to holy lives, worthy of being greeted by Paul with “Grace” and “Peace”.

 So, what do I mean by this? It is said that in the great railroad stations you can see the departure and arrival times of the trains written on the large screens. It is almost as if those numbers and names are written by themselves, and yet we know that those are programmed through computers, by people to give the right information. In those stations, the things that appear on the screens are predefined and already programmed…

 Similarly, Paul the Apostle gives us the joyful news that our salvation and faith has already been planned for through Jesus. When Jesus was born, God was planning my and your salvation. God knew that Jesus would not be respected then. He knew that Herod would try to kill him as an infant. He knew that all of Jesus’ disciples except John would be murdered. He knew that you and I would need a means to repent, and He sensed that if He allowed His Only Son to be born without the majestic glorification that he was worthy of, that you and I would be able to recognize this Meek Savior-King and respect Him. God knew His Son’s value – and He also knew your value, my dear brother and sister. He knew that you also, like His Son, would be born a helpless babe; however, your end without Jesus born would have been dark and dead. For that reason, he predestined, pre-planned, prepared, and ordained every situation, so that you would have a chance to accept His Infant-Child as He was.

 God put the invitation before you once and does so again today and reminds us of that truth. It is as if God is saying to each of us today, “I saw you when I gave you my Son for 33 years.” “You are worth as much as my Son and My having you with Me was worth all His sufferings and it will be worth it for your children and grandchildren as well.”

 Oh, how great is God’s love, that He allowed His Jesus, His One and only child, to come to our sinful world, to put on our sinful nature without committing a single sin but experiencing every bit of suffering otherwise as we do.

 For this truth you and I have an appropriate response: to live a grateful life to our Jesus for being born a helpless child like us and yet also for His salvation on the Cross and through the Empty Tomb. Truly God the Father is worthy of our glorification, our gratefulness. He sent His Son to us that we may be adopted and become along with Jesus the children of God. Therefore, Glory be to God for His Son’s birth, and Glory be to Jesus who lowered Himself for us and became man for our salvation, for our new birth!

 The birth of Jesus was the beginning of God’s answer to your lost spiritual state. God saw us and changed our life too when Jesus was being born. So, give glory to God for His Son’s birth. Give glory to God who had already seen you as His plan was going forward with His Son’s entrance into this world. The birth of Jesus was the beginning of God’s answer to your lost spiritual state. Rejoice, and praise the Lord. Merry Christmas to you all.

 May the Lord Bless You; Amen.