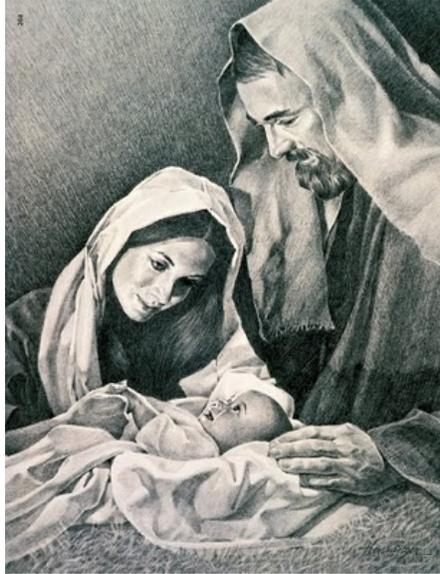


**"...for joy that a man is born into the world"  
John 16:20, 21**

Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice:  
and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come:  
But as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish,  
for the joy that a man is born into the world.



Our Lord Jesus Christ always spoke in Eastern phraseology, "...for joy that a man is born into the world." She is not joyful just because a child is born but because a man is born. The Eastern people are very keen on sons, not that they despise their daughters. Hannah prayed to the Lord to give her a son.

Eastern people pray that the first child may be a son because the son takes the place of the father in the East.

If a man has no sons he adopts a son before he dies, one of his own cast, that he may act as his son legally. That is why many more adoptions take place in the East because of this cultural habit.

When a woman goes into labor she has two problems - mental and physical. She worries because she is afraid the child is going to be a girl. If she has a girl, the relations between her and her husband are strained. They think it is not a good omen to have girls all the time. Therefore, unless a boy is born God's blessing is not on the family. If it is a girl they just carry a common message to the outside that it is a girl. But if it is a boy they put on a big bouquet. They distribute rice to the whole town. They give goods and clothes to hundreds of people. The whole community rejoices. If a girl is born the midwife often keeps it a secret till the mother is strong enough to take the shock for fear she might die.

It is a tremendous joy and blessing to an Oriental family to have a son. A man may give all of his wealth to God (the temple) to have one son. He may fast many days, walk miles and miles as an offering of thanksgiving for one son. He may even give much of his property, but not to give proceeds to the poor, because he as an Easterner had been trained to give to the temple. That is why Jesus told him to sell and give to the poor rather than to the temple.

Bishop K.C. Pillai, D.D.