

## Happy Birthday Jesus

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring - not even a mouse.  
The children were nestled all snug in their beds  
While visions of Christmas gifts danced in their heads.

A holiday Barbie, some video games.  
A basketball goal and some new rollerblades,  
A new Beanie Baby - the bear or the frog,  
A Giga Pet - maybe a cat or a dog...

An album or CD, some shoes with red lights,  
A brand new computer with more gigabytes!  
And I, in my jammies and mom in her gown  
Were so very happy to finally lie down.

We were exhausted, the bed was our goal.  
The last-minute shopping had taken its toll.  
The stockings were stuffed all with candy and loot,  
And 'lectronic toys that go Zot, Bleep and Zoot.

We hunted and searched so the gifts were just right.  
Thank goodness for stores that stay open all night!  
We'd fought the crowds hard from dawn until dark  
And that was just getting a good place to park!

We'd hiked for two hours 'cross that parking lot,  
But we were SO proud of the gifts that we'd bought.  
A sweater for Mary, a new watch for John,  
Some toys for the Jones kids to clutter their lawn.

For the pastor's wife, something with sentiment deep.  
(Oh, she'll never guess that we got it so cheap)!  
We'd shopped high and low all night and all day.  
It tuckered us out, but that was OK...

For piles of presents - all wrapped up so fine..  
Were under our own tree - and some of them mine!!  
I'd played Santa Claus along side the best.  
And now I was sleepy and ready to rest.

So I, in my jammies and mom in her gown..  
Went into our bedroom to finally lie down.  
As we lay there, she asked me, "Oh dear, did you pray?"  
"Happy Birthday, dear Jesus..and have a nice day."

"What'd she get me?" I wondered, as we lay hand in and..  
And we both drifted off into deep la-la land.  
It seemed I'd been sleeping a minute or two..  
When I suddenly awoke to the sound of...a MOO!!

"A cow at our window?", I thought, "Couldn't be.."  
But I rose from the bed just to look out and see.  
I went to the window and opened the blind.  
"Nothing there, I was dreaming - or out of my mind!"

Then I heard it again, this time from inside!!  
"Now where in the house could a great big cow hide?"

I looked back at the bed where my wife was asleep.  
Then, I heard something else! 'Twas the bleat of a sheep!!

"Something here's just not right", and I started to shake.  
And I looked 'round the room for a weapon to take.  
"Someone's here playing pranks, and it's not very funny".  
I feared they were stealing our presents and money...

So I picked up a lamp - it was all I could find...  
And I went out with retaliation in mind.  
As I got to the end of the hall, I could see  
There were long shadows cast by the light of the tree.

I was frozen in fear as of impending doom..  
There were eight or ten people in my living room!  
I could tell by the shadows that moved on the wall  
There were certainly people - but that wasn't all..

There were some kind of animals also, in there -  
They looked like big dogs and they had lots of hair!  
As I crept to the room, I thought I'd soon die.  
But I just had to fend for my home - I'm a GUY!

When I peeked around that dark corner..Surprise!!  
What I saw..I just could not believe in my eyes.  
The animals were not dogs, they were sheep!  
And I saw some men kneeling, not making a peep. .

They were dressed in wool robes and they carried sticks, all -  
And their shoes were all stacked on the floor in the hall.  
They were all gathered 'round on their knees. I could see  
Something had their attention under my Christmas tree.

There was a small donkey and cows really big.  
I thought.."Cattle and sheep, and not one single pig."  
And somehow in all of this weirdness, I found  
That my fear was all gone. Then I heard a strange sound.

The sound was familiar - it made me recall  
When my own precious children were still very small.  
Then I heard it again, and I knew it to be  
The sweet little coo of a newborn baby.

Then the men gathered 'round my tree kneeling began  
To sing songs in the language of some other land.  
They were holy songs - that I could tell, although I  
Could never explain just quite how or quite why.

I just KNEW, and I knew that I just had to see  
Who they sang the songs for, down there under my tree.  
So, I inched my way in, trying not to offend.  
'Til I'd worked my way up to the front of the men.

There I saw a young man sitting down on one knee.  
He looked quite mature, although younger than me.  
In his eyes, I saw wisdom, compassion, and care..  
And the strength of a man with a great load to bear.

By his side, a young woman - barely more than a child..

But a lady so lovely, and gentle and mild.  
 I could see in her face - innocence and great joy..  
 And I saw in her arms, was her new baby boy!

I was awestruck indeed that this sight I should see.  
 Then she held out the child and nodded to me.  
 "Oh, I couldn't", I thought. "That could never be right."  
 But she nodded again and I shuddered with fright.

Then I looked at the babe and He looked back at me..  
 And I knew by His look, that this thing had to be.  
 So I held out my arms and she gave Him to me.  
 And I held the Christ child beneath my Christmas tree!

He was precious and sweet, and a thrill to behold..  
 And the moment was worth more than silver and gold.  
 And then, quite out of habit, without even thinking..  
 I just touched the palm of His hand with my pinky.

And just like any baby, His hand grabbed it tight!  
 He held onto my finger with all of His might.  
 He was strong, but so tiny and fragile, and frail;  
 Then I looked at His hand and I thought of the nails.

I thought of Him hanging - His arms outstretched wide.  
 I thought of Him pierced with a sword in His side.  
 I thought of the crown made of thorns on His head..  
 I thought of Him hanging there..on the cross...dead.

I thought of my sin, all my guilt and my shame;  
 For my sin, He died, and that's why He came.  
 He rose from the dead, conquered death and the grave.  
 Though I am unworthy, my sins He forgave.

I awoke with a start, to the sound of the noise  
 Of a houseful of children expecting new toys.  
 I went to the living room, still half asleep,  
 And kind of expected to see cows and sheep.

I could see all was normal, as I looked around,  
 And deep inside, I was a little let down.  
 The presents were beautiful, stacked on the floor..  
 But not so important as they'd seemed before.

I looked at my family and just HAD to say:  
 "Before we tear into this stuff, let us pray."  
 We stood, hand in hand, and then each bowed his head  
 And, recalling what happened the night 'fore that, I said,

"Please forgive us, dear Father..sometimes we forget  
 That this day's not about all the presents we get.  
 It's not about friendship, it's just about You...  
 And what, for Your children, You're willing to do.

Forgive us, oh Lord, we sincerely pray..  
 Happy Birthday, dear Jesus...and thank You for this day!"