

December 2004

Timothy, Christopher, Elizabeth

Jonathan & Priscilla

with our love

in the New Year

and every blessing

Happy Christmas

Wishing you a very

*In principio erat verbum...* in the beginning was the Word. And that Word still speaks to us today, bringing life and hope in a world that is so often dark and troubled. He speaks into our hearts by His Spirit, and He speaks through His written word as we read and study it. Created nearly 1300 years ago, the Lindisfarne Gospels are a stunning presentation of His word in the form expected and appreciated in that day. But beautiful though they are, today most of us find a modern printed English translation far easier to use. As you read the Christmas story, have you ever wondered what words Mary actually heard, or the shepherds, when the angel announced the Lord's birth? Gabriel didn't say, "Fear not!" in King James English. Nor, I think, did he speak Greek, as it was eventually written by Matthew and Luke. To be readily understood, he probably spoke to them in Aramaic, the everyday language of the Jews at that time—and of Jesus himself. As this Christmas approaches, I am beginning the formatting of the New Testament in modern-day Chaldean, a direct descendant of the Aramaic spoken by Jesus and his companions. Once printed in Arabic script, it will look quite different from either the Lindisfarne Gospels or our English Bibles. But it will be the appropriate form of God's word for the Chaldean-speaking community of today; our hope is that this new translation will communicate as clearly and powerfully in the 21st century as the angels' voice did 2000 years ago.

In the beginning...

...was the Word

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