

# CHRISTMAS

**December 03, 2009**

Christmas. Incarnation. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” “Love was when God became a man, locked in time and space without rank or place.” “Immanuel – God with us.” Not a phantom visit. Not a spiritual presence visit when the church gathers to worship Him. But a real flesh and blood visit with a birthplace in Bethlehem and a home address in Nazareth. “You shall call His name Jesus.”

Jesus’ birth impacted history and changed the dating system. Before His birth the dates are B.C. (Before Christ. Now it is B.C.E. – before the Christian era or before the Common era). After His birth the dates are A.D. (Anno Domini – in the year of the Lord.) But more than that, one short life has radically changed the world.

Every year, for the last 2000 years, the world has recognized Jesus’ birth (Christmas), death (Good Friday) and resurrection (Easter). Every Lord’s Day (Sunday) the church celebrates Jesus’ birth, ministry, death, burial, and resurrection. We all know and never dispute the fact that Jesus was not born on December 25th. God in His wisdom made sure that no one knows for certain the date of Jesus’ birth.

It is an undeniable fact that the world’s celebration of Christmas is pagan, idolatrous and commercial. It is an undeniable fact that churches have been party to the paganism,

idolatry and commercialism. It is also an undeniable fact that we are not commanded in God's word to celebrate "Christmas". And the perennial question is : should a true Christian celebrate Christmas? I am sure my answer to this question will not satisfy all, but I do hope and pray that it will be helpful.

Firstly, let me say that the celebration of Christmas is an amoral issue. This means if you refuse to celebrate Christmas you have not sinned. And if you choose to celebrate Christmas you have not sinned. If you celebrate Christmas without decorations you have not sinned. If you celebrate Christmas with decorations you have not sinned. If you give gifts during Christmas you have not sinned. If you do not give gifts during Christmas you have not sinned. If you celebrate with friends and with lots to eat and drink you have not sinned. If you celebrate like Scrooge you have not sinned.

Secondly, I choose to celebrate Christmas because I have made the choice to stop being a "reactionary" Christian. There are many doctrines in God's word that have been taken over by liberals, apostates, cults and even well-meaning Christians and misinterpreted, misused, and in some cases even "paganized". Far too often we react by shying away and becoming silent about these doctrines. This reactionary behavior must stop.

For example, we know that the most powerful apostate church in the world has made the Lord's Supper into an idolatrous celebration and a false gospel message. Does this mean that we must stop celebrating the Lord's Supper? NO! We must continue to celebrate the Lord's Supper and always be vigilant that we are doing so in a Biblical manner.

Today “love is kind” means we must tolerate and / or accept deviant sexual conduct and marriages. Does this mean we must no longer embrace the truths in 1Cor.13 and their application to Biblically ordained marriages?

Thirdly, I celebrate Christmas because it gives me the opportunity to focus on the incarnation in a very peculiar way. The incarnation is absolutely important. Without the incarnation there would be no ministry, message, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and promised return. In other words, without the incarnation there would no be salvation for sinners like you and me and no future hope.

For my final point I want to turn your attention to Luke 2:7-20. Let us note the following from this passage. Firstly, Christmas is “good news” (vs.10), literally, “gospel news”. Like the angels, we can celebrate the birth of our Lord by telling others about the gospel news of Christmas. Secondly, the angels praised God and the shepherds glorified and praised God. (vss.13, 20). We can celebrate Christmas by glorifying and praising God.

Thirdly, vs.19 tells us that “Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.” We can celebrate Christmas by treasuring in our minds the Biblical accounts of the Lord’s birth. And then take the time to “ponder” them, to think about God and what He has done and try to understand His ways more fully. Lastly, vs.18 tells us that “all who heard ... wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.” The word “wondered” also means “to be amazed”. As you “ponder”, become amazed, become

awed by the mystery of the incarnation and God's marvelous works through it on our behalf. "Glory to God in the highest."