

'THE REALLY GOOD LIFE'

(Life of Christ Series)

Studies in Luke's Series

The Christ-Myths Story

*"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: **Preach the word!** Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers: and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."*

2 Timothy 4:1-4

The Day

I know its politically incorrect, religiously partisan, and in the secular market place – bad for business, but I believe it is perfectly all right to say 'Merry Christmas!' this time of year. Oh, I know that it isn't certain that December 25th is the exact birth date of Jesus. In fact, I'm pretty sure from the gospel accounts that His arrival in Bethlehem was most likely during a much warmer season in Israel. But since I'm not worshipping a particular calendar day, but my Savior Who came in the flesh, an 'Incarnation Celebration' seems very appropriate.

Roman Catholicism picked the date for Christmas to subtly 'Christianize' the year-end festivals of pagan people whom they wanted to assimilate into their religion. But I don't like Christmas as a tool to disguise idolatrous religion; I like Christmas, regardless of the calendar position you give it, because it recalls when 'God was manifested in the flesh' to become our Savior (**1 Timothy 3:16**). Just think of it "...**His Name Immanuel – God with us...**" (**Matthew 1:23**) – that has to merit a holiday to marvel at the Lord's amazing love and grace in coming into history (His-story) as Savior!

There is another reason to set aside this time of year to meditate and marvel about the incarnation of Christ – because it coincides perfectly with the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah (also called "The Feast of Lights" or "Dedication"). Although it is not one of the 7 mandatory festivals of Judaism, it was and is an important holiday mentioned in Scripture.

A few months before His death and resurrection during the spring feast of Passover, the Lord Jesus Christ was in the Jerusalem temple: "**Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple...**" (**John 10:22-23**). As with all other holy days of Judaism, the Lord Jesus was literally fulfilling OT holidays that symbolically pictured the purpose of His first advent ministries. He, Who was, and is, '**the Light of the world**' (**John 8:12**) was 'in the temple' sometime in late December teaching a hostile crowd what it means to be 'born again' (**John 10:25-30**). It almost certainly isn't the day Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but 33 years later, on or around December 25th. At the temple Christ was seeking to spiritually conceive faith into hearts so they could be delivered into life everlasting. It's just another reason for the season to be announced as "Merry Christmas!" by all who have experienced the gift of Him. If you don't know, love, and follow Jesus Christ as you personal Lord and Savior, it is only right that you stick with 'Happy Holidays', but if the Spirit of God is filling your heart and soul, don't be surprised if 'Merry Christmas' is the joyous greeting of choice that flows from you to others at this time of year.

Dis-Mything Christmas

"Therefore (since you are a new creation in Christ), putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another."

Ephesians 4:25

Taken seriously, this single verse changes everything for a truly 'born-again' Christian. The sincere follower of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be completely separate from everything false and dishonest (**Proverbs 19:5, John 8:44, Colossians 3:9, 1 John 2:21, Revelation 21:8 & 22:15**). It is a fundamental trait of all who belong to Christ, that we always '**...speak the truth in love...**' (**Ephesians 4:15**). Dishonesty, deception, exaggeration and fabricated stories, myths and legends have no place in the life of a Christian (**1 Timothy 1:4, Titus 1:14, etc.**). Those who have not yet been converted to a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ think nothing of embellishing the biblical Christmas story with Santa Claus, flying reindeer, Frosty the Snowman, etc. – these are merely little 'white' (and red) lies that make Christmas magical for them. But the truth is that such things are not only dishonest; they actually detract from and upstage the real message of Christmas:

“There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). That message from God, by an angel from heaven, is awesome and needs no other embellishment from the whimsical land of fairy tales. For worshipers of the Lord Jesus Christ, this holiday is about Bethlehem – not the North Pole! It’s about Almighty God’s wonderful gift of His Son – not a fictional, overweight sleigh driver with sack of toys. It’s about Christ the Lord – not Kris Kringle. Since unbelievers reject Him Who is the way, the truth, and the life, they must settle for ‘fractured fairy tales’. Sadly, so many who rarely if ever open the Bible with their children, work feverishly to convince them that ‘The Night Before Christmas’ is the poetic scripture about Christmas. At CBF we encourage all Christians to keep ‘Christ’ as the Reason for the season – period. It is an excellent occasion to teach our kids about being graciously different from the dishonest secular world all around us (***Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1, Colossians 3:17, etc.***). Cleaning out the mythical nonsense from the true Christmas story will give Jesus all the glory and draw others to Him alone as Savior and Lord.

‘Dreaming of A Right Christmas’
(God’s Plan for A Stress-Free Holiday Season)
Matthew 1:18-25

Adjustment to God’s Will

(Joseph’s spiritual response to disappointment)

*“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then **Joseph her husband, being a just man,** and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream...”*

vs. 18-20

Acceptance of God’s Word

(Joseph’s Scriptural illumination and inspiration)

“...while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”

v 20

*And she will bring forth a Son, and **you shall call His Name JESUS,** for He shall save His people from their sins.”*

v 21

*“So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, **“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His Name Immanuel,**’ which is translated, **“God with us.”** (see Isaiah 7:14 & Jeremiah 31:22) vs. 22-23*

Active Obedience to God’s Will

(Joseph’s immediate obedience, abstinence and reverence)

*“Then **Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him** and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. **And he called His Name JESUS.**”*

vs. 24-25