

## 120323 Meeker Christian Church CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

If it is true that no one can prove JESUS was born on December 25th - why celebrate HIS birth at Christmas? In fact I am told evidence suggests JESUS was born earlier in the year, not in December at all, so why celebrate HIS birth at Christmas? Christmas is said to have come from a pagan holiday that Christians transformed to celebrate JESUS' birth, so why celebrate HIS birth on a pagan holiday? Israel celebrates Hanukkah 2023 Dec 7-15 which is their celebration of lights but has no relationship whatsoever to the birth of Jesus which they are still waiting for in their theology, so why celebrate JESUS' birth at Christmas? I am told Russian and other countries celebrate Christmas in early January with their own purposes, some related to birth of Christ, many not so. So why celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas in December? //// BECAUSE :-)

There are lots of REASONS WHY I BELIEVE IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR CHRISTIANS TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS.

1. It is a wonderful traditional reminder of the birth of our Savior and everything associated with that Holy event as revealed over and over in the Bible. YES I understand that Christmas, just like every religious holiday struggles to maintain the identity for which we hold sacred. Even to the intervention and sometime outright conflicts of secular paganism under the guise of compromise statements I used to hear a lot like "if the Bible does not forbid it, then it is allowed." Or "do you think God does not want you to have fun at Christmas" as reasoning for compromising Biblical instruction on things inappropriate and unhealthy for Christians. My counsel is to keep Christ foremost in Christmas and keep clearly in perspective that part of the celebration of Christ's birth versus secular practice. Otherwise it becomes a compromise and assimilation of the secular which the

2. Bible and history both record can overshadow and affect spiritual faith maturity and ministry. It matters not at all that the celebration may have come from a pagan holiday – for just like a host of songs that have been transformed from pagan themes to Christian themes – may they all be absorbed to magnifies and clarify the Holy message of salvation. Just a quick illustration: Our local celebration of lights and the singing of Christmas Carols I believe make an impact for the Christ of Christmas.

2. A second reason for celebrating Christmas is to test our personal practice and participation by the revelation of scripture, for instance:

A. Colossians 2:8 *“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on CHRIST.”* In other words be sure and examine frequently the practices of Christmas fit with Christian tradition and not those of the world.

B. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 *“In the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.”* This truth is becoming more and more practical in our current age as the opportunities for sacred values compromise is utterly staggering through the avalanche of technology. But for believers - the Bible speaks loud and clear how to deal with those occurrences and temptations: 2 Thessalonians 3:6 *“In the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.”* Did you catch the context of that reasoning: The message is that if your Christian brother insists habitually on doing things that harm the testimony for Jesus you have to make a decision.

3. a third reason for celebrating Christmas is to emphasize the meaning of

3. CHRIST the SAVIOR:/// A wonderful family time experience is to read Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus in Isaiah 53 and talk over what you understand and recognize as being fulfilled in the lives of your family: – It is simply and beautifully summarized by a Mr. Hoff:

Jesus our SAVIOR...  
was born to deliver HIS people;  
HE lived to unlock Heaven's door;  
He died to redeem HIS creation'  
HE lives, King of Kings, evermore.

Many are really getting into the excitement of Christmas. So here is a 4<sup>th</sup> reason for us to celebrate Christmas: Proverbs 28:14a *Happy is the man who is always reverent,*

I just have to stop and pray for a moment: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for this encouraging and so exciting scriptural insight that reveals our happiness on earth is conditional and proportional to our reverent lifestyle. I do pray that we gain understanding just how wonderfully important our reverent approach to celebrating Christmas results in happiness in life circumstances and consequence all year long. In this Christmas season impress on us a thankful heart prompted by the Holy Spirit for the happiness You have mercifully made possible by the presence of Jesus in this Holy Christmas season. Hallelujah! In Jesus name, amen

5. A 5<sup>th</sup> reason for celebrating Christmas is the very word itself: Adding "mas" to Christ simply means to "celebrate CHRIST." That is one reason Christian music has such an impact on the celebration. I have a minister friend Dale Lovelady that plays Christmas music in his office all year long – and I often hear Jean singing or playing Christmas oriented music anytime throughout the year. They used to have a great old time defending their year around Christmas music joy. I have to confess it puts a smile on my face and a big delight in my heart when I hear her

4. singing Jingle Bells, or It Came Upon a Midnight Clear while fixing breakfast in July! Quite a remarkable woman with her variety of God gifted eccentrics.

Make the most of your celebration through the gifts god has inspired for the writing and presentation of sacred Christmas music.

6. A sixth reason for Christmas celebrating comes from a memorial (Adapted from a poem by Robert Lewis Stevenson that I quote) “Let us remember the birth of JESUS, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the Wise Men.”

His inspiration for using our Christmas celebration as a reminder is often taught in the Bible. As a sample:

A. Psalm 77:11 *“I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.”*

B. Psalm 105:1-5 *Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. 2 Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. 3. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. 4. Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. 5 Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced.*

C. Psalm 137:6 *May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy.*

D. 2 Timothy 2:8 *Remember JESUS CHRIST, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel,*

While we are delighting ourselves in the Christmas Celebration lets also remember GOD’S examples of the importance of remembering...

---Genesis 9:16 *Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between GOD and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.* For us in Meeker it is a matter of looking out the window to the

5. hills and mountains, the moon, stars and glorious lighted cross above our town. Delight yourselves in these things of the Lord created and presented for your joy and happiness and ever present reminder!! As we are told in:

---Eucharist: Luke 22:19 *And HE took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.*

-- 2 Peter 1:12-15 *"So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them are firmly established in the truth you now have. 13 I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, 14 because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our LORD JESUS CHRIST has made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things. The more we are reminded, the more we are encouraged, the more closely we draw to Jesus the more happiness results because He is with us through every event of life.*

7. Our 7<sup>th</sup> reason for Celebrating Christmas: The opportunity it presents for Parental responsibility to teach and train their children, supported and modeled by grandparents and other family members: Deuteronomy 6 (reference only) and Proverbs 22:6 *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

The wonderful story of the arrival of the Christ Child became the gospel for mankind, the SAVIOR of the world. The word gospel as you know means "good news." That is what Christmas Celebrating is all about – "the good news."

Here is the way the apostle John characterizes the importance of learning and living the gospel reverently: John 20:31 *But these are written that you may believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the SON of GOD, and that by believing you may have life in HIS name.*

6. I have often been inspired by the poetic writings of Helen Steiner Rice and use them as inspiration to others like this one entitled GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD  
Our FATHER up in Heaven, long, long years ago,  
Looked down in HIS great mercy upon the earth below  
And saw that folks were lonely and lost in deep despair  
And so HE said, "I'll send My Son to walk among them there...  
So they can hear HIM speaking and feel HIS nearness, too,  
And see the many miracles that Faith alone can do...  
For if man really sees HIM and can touch HIS healing hand  
I know it will be easier to Believe and Understand:  
And so the HOLY CHRIST CHILD came down to live on earth  
And that is why we celebrate HIS holy, wondrous birth,  
And that is why at Christmas the world becomes aware  
that heaven may seem far away but GOD is everywhere.

Children lead in O Little Town Of Bethlem

Colossians 2:8

2 Thessalonians 3:6

Isaiah 53 reference only

Proverbs 28:14a

Psalm 77:11

Psalm 105:1-5

Psalm 137:6

2 Timothy 2:8

Genesis 9:16

Luke 22:19

2 Peter 1:12-15

Proverbs 22:6

John 20:31