

"Tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"-1King 22:16

She Will Bear a Son

“She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”
Matthew 1:21

When Mary was found with child the Lord appeared to Joseph, to whom she was betrothed, and gave him this message. The angel explained that the child in Mary’s womb was conceived in her of the Holy Spirit and that he should not be afraid to take her as his wife. In this simple statement to Joseph the angel revealed God’s plan for His Son and the redemption of mankind in His name.

“She will bear a Son.” In the days before ultrasound imaging it was impossible for one to know the sex of a child before birth. The infant in Mary was a baby boy as the Lord had promised her (Luke 1:31). No man could have known this for certain although we might say they had a fifty-fifty chance. This was the child of promise, the “Seed” in the promise to Abraham by which all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:16).

“You shall call His name Jesus.” This same message was given to mother Mary (Luke 1:31). The name “Jesus” is derived from the verb, “to save.” In the Hebrew it is the same as Joshua. It was a very common name among the Jews. The name is made up of two parts. The first is the expression for God, ‘Yahweh,’ and the second means “to deliver”. It means “God will deliver.” It means He is the Savior. Jesus had another name as well and that was Immanuel, which translated means “God with us.” The giving of this name was in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah given about 700 years before the birth of this child to a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). There is no single name that will suffice to describe Jesus and there are many descriptive terms that are applied to Him.

“For He shall save His people.” This is the reason for the giving of the name as we explained above. A high ranking official will often times refer to those who surround him on a daily basis and serve his needs, as “his people.” God had a people in the Old Testament. These people were the chosen people. It certainly was an honor to be chosen, but more importantly it meant that they existed to serve Him. When they refused to serve God, they lost the honor. Who were the people, whom the angel was referring to

when said these words to Joseph? In John 6:37 Jesus said, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.” The people of Jesus are those who “behold(s) the Son and believes in Him” (John 6:40). They are the people who will be raised up to eternal life in the last day (John 6:39, 40). His people are those people who are saved. He cannot save those people who do not come to Him. He cannot save those people who do not believe in Him. The Father has not given the unbelieving to be His people but the believing.

He shall save His people “from their sins.” This is the reason that Jesus came. Albert Barnes wrote, “It was not to save them in their sins but to save them from their sins.” There is no greater work than to bring the lost to Jesus so that He can save them. Materialistic pursuits and a “gospel” that is designed to satisfy physical longings do nothing about sin.

For His part the sinless Jesus died on the cross to redeem us from sin. “As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities (Isaiah 53:11). On our part we must believe and obey Him to become “His people.” -Karl Hennecke (The Moment of Truth 2007)

CHRISTMAS: CAN CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE IT II?



Did you know that there were laws that **forbade** [forbid] the celebration of Christmas in most of New England until the 1800s? In fact Christmas was not widely accepted in the **U.S.** until a large number of Irish and German immigrants began to arrive. In Colonial America, the Puritans of New England shared radical Protestant disapproval of Christmas. Celebration was outlawed in Boston from 1659 to 1681. The ban by the Pilgrims was revoked in 1681 by English governor Sir Edmund Andros. In America, interest in Christmas was revived in the 1820s by

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several short stories by Washington Irving which appeared in his, The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon and "Old Christmas."

Isaac Newton argued that the date of Christmas was selected to correspond with the winter solstice. "In 1743, German Protestant Paul Ernst Jablonski argued **that** Christmas was placed on December 25th to correspond with the Roman solar holiday, *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti*, and was therefore a "paganization" that debased the true church. In 1889, Louis Duchesne suggested that the date of Christmas was calculated as nine months after the Annunciation (March 25), the traditional date of the Incarnation. The festival[s] of Dies Natalis Solis Invicti [and] was placed on the date of the solstice because this was [on this] **the** day that the Sun reversed its southward retreat and proved itself to be "unconquered." Several early Christian writers connected the rebirth of the sun to the birth of Jesus. "O, how wonderfully acted Providence that on that day on which that Sun was born...Christ should be born," Cyprian wrote. John Chrysostom also commented on the connection, "They call it the 'Birthday of the Unconquered'. Who indeed is so unconquered as Our Lord . . .?" (See Wikipedia online Encyclopedia). Some say "Let's put Christ back into Christmas," but the fact of the matter is that Christ was never in Christmas.

Should a Christian celebrate Christmas as a religious observance? What do[es] the scriptures teach regarding the **matter**? The only ceremony that we are commanded to celebrate is the death of our Savior, and we do this by partaking **of** the Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day. Every faithful follower of Christ takes part in the Lord's Supper every first day of the week (Act 20:7). The scriptures **teach** that we are to remember His death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins (Matthew 26:26-29 1 Corinthians 11:17-43).

Peter states "**According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue**"(2 Peter 1:3, **emp. added**). God only revealed what He wanted us to know through the Holy Spirit, which guided the apostles into all truth (John 16:13), and I know that the Lord has said nothing about Christ being born on December 25th. One can read in Deuteronomy 12:29-32 how God warned the nation of Israel not to be carried away by the traps of men. Paul condemned the churches [at] **of** Galatia for becoming enslaved again to the observance of religious holy days (Galatians 4:9-11). If Paul rebuked the Galatians for

trying to hold onto the holy days ordained by God in the O.T., what would **He** say about being enslaved to the keeping of a holy day like Christmas? Christmas was originally invented as a way of making Christianity more palatable to pagans.

When the celebration of Christmas is either taught as an ordinance of the church, that Christians must observe [celebrate] to be pleasing to God, or presented as an additional ceremony with which God will surely be pleased, then it is a violation of God's authority and we have gone beyond the doctrine of Christ (2 John 2:9-10). **The Bible is silent concerning the religious observance of the birth of Christ.**

[omit: does not give any data concerning this, and also in the writings of the first centuries A.D. we find no definite indication as to the day on which Christ was born.]

If a Christian cannot celebrate Christmas without associating it with idolatry or with an unsanctioned church practice (like a Catholic Mass), then certainly they should not practice it. Just because a religious act is conducted in God's name and to His glory does not mean that He is pleased with it. Do you remember when Aaron made the golden calf, [and] set it up as a god [, he] and declared **that** the next day would be **"a feast to the LORD"** (Ex. 32:5-6, **emp. added**). Obviously, God was not pleased with this type of spontaneous worship. Read Matt 7:21-23 and notice, what the Bible says about those who claim to be practicing things that they thought to be right, i.e. doing such in the name of the Lord, what will [be the Lord pronounce] **the Lord say** to them? What will the Lord say to **those** [them] who **do** [does] the Father's will? This passage among others should warn us to make sure that we always **[are to]** stay within the confines of the scriptures (Col. 3:17 John 12:48).

Is it not unacceptable to God to create traditions and then teach them as God's will, as approved ordinances of the church? What did Jesus have to say about this principal in Matt. 15:9?

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Should a Christian celebrate Christmas as a secular holiday? If it be the Lord's will, we shall discuss **that** next week? - Fred Singleton

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