

Christmas Thinking

Isa 9:2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Isa 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Christmas in America is really two celebrations. One is mostly secular. If we look at that celebration we see no reference to the birth of a savior. There are little signs of Christ as you go down the aisles of any store. If you look at the Christmas cards, most reference other things about the season and avoid the Birth of Christ.

The other view is that the redeemer of the world had His human beginning in a little town called Bethlehem. The virgin birth, the Shepherd's, the Angels, The inn, the stable, the manager, the wise men are remembered and the whole story is celebrated. The Christmas scripture is read. The look is for cards and reminders of the birth of the redeemer of the world.

The true story of Christmas keeps intruding in the secular world as traditional Christmas carols are sung. Words like "born to give them second birth" has little meaning to those who have little understanding of what the Bible teaches.

Christians, if we are not careful can be lured into substituting the secular view for the Bible view. Christmas is a wonderful celebration if we as Christians keep things in true perspective.

1. The Worlds Hope Comes from Outside

- A. The cry today is look inside ourselves and you will see the answers. Just focusing upon self leads to selfishness. If we look inside we will see the effects of sin. This world sure doesn't look like it has the answers to life's problems. Sin is taking its toll.
- B. The Angels told the Shepard's: **Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.**
- C. **John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.**
- D. Jesus Christ came to demonstrate God's love and caring to a mixed up world. But the biggest reason is to pay the penalty for sin through His death and show redemption through His resurrection. If we only knew Him as a baby it would have no meaning. We must remember that keeping Jesus a baby is OK to worldly thinking. If He is just a baby then we would not have to think of Him as a judge. If He is a baby then we don't have to look at His teaching. If He was just the baby in the story then we could worship the other things in the Christmas story. We could worship Mary or the gifts that were given or the angels, wise men (the other things in the story).
- E. Today Christmas to some means conflict and despair instead of peace and good will. Despair of trying to figure out how to buy gifts with little money or despair of the conflicts with others. How many times have you heard someone say "I'll be glad when it is over". The measure of caring sometimes is how much we buy instead of how much God cares for us. Leaving the true meaning out of Christmas, has us focusing upon self instead of focusing on the redemption Christ Brings.
- F. The Angels went on to say: **Luke 2:13 - 14 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.**

- G. If we are going to celebrate the birth of the Saviour, then the thoughts and actions should be leading to peace with good will. Of course the peace spoken of, is the peace of having our sins forgiven through accepting the person of Christ. That peace though should be reflected in our thoughts and actions.

2. Our Hope Comes from God

- A. **Luke 1:26 - 32** And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. 29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:
- B. Mary was not chosen because of her popularity. Good looks was not listed as the reason why. Family connection in the world was not a point considered. The Angel stated the biggest part of the reason “**the Lord is with thee**”. She was faithful to God. She belonged to him. That is why she was to be so greatly blessed.
- C. Mary was told of a happening that would change the entire course of her life. As anyone who has raised a child can attest, her life would never be the same. This was not to be an ordinary child but the Son of God. What was her thoughts and answer to this great news? **Luke 1:38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.**
- D. Such trusting faith. There was no hesitation, no complaining, no excuses, but complete trust. Her heart completely belonged to God. As was told to Samuel: **1Sam 16:7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.**
God looked on the heart of this teenage woman and said she is the one. She trusts in me.
- E. As God looks upon our heart, what does He see?
- How do we view the things God has done for us?
 - How do we view the birth, death and resurrection of Christ?
 - Do we see the true meaning of these things?
 - Do we reflect the love that motivated God to do these things?

3. Take God With Us

- A. In our Christmas travels we do not always choose where we have to go. But we can choose who we take with us. We shouldn't get so caught up in things that we forget why we celebrate Christmas. Since it is a holiday dedicated to the birth of the saviour we should take Him with us. **Mat 28:20 ... lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world...**
- B. **Isa 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.**
- C. We cannot lose sight of the important things about this season if we are “**in Christ**”.
- D. **Php 4:6 - 7 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**
- E. **John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.**
- F. *It was in December of 1903, that after many attempts, the Wright brothers, Orville and Wilbur, were successful in getting their “flying machine” off the ground and into the air at Kitty Hawk. Thrilled over the accomplishment, they telegraphed this message to their sister Katherine: “We have actually flown 120 feet.*

Will be home for Christmas.” Katherine hurried to the editor of the local newspaper and showed him the message. He glanced at it and said, “How nice. The boys will be home for Christmas.” He totally missed the big news—for the first time in human history, man had flown! (SOURCE: Daily Bread, December 23, 1991.)

- G.** If not careful we will miss the big news about Christmas. Jesus Christ came to save sinners like us.