

## INTRODUCTION

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the words “Happy Holidays?”
2. I ask that question because I was told that a few times as I was shopping for Christmas.
3. As I was leaving one store, the sales woman said “Happy Holidays” to me of which I replied, “It is Christmas!” You should be saying “Merry Christmas.”
4. She replied by saying that she didn’t know if I were Jewish and didn’t want to offend me.
5. I told her this time of the year is about Christ!
6. And since Jesus was Jewish, I certainly would not be offended!
7. It seems that as each year goes by Christmas is becoming more about Santa and not about Christ.
8. Of course, our world does not want anything to do with Jesus Christ but have no problem celebrating Christmas.
9. They will take the holiday but not the Person who initiated it all.
10. What is *the real meaning of Christmas?*
11. Is it presents, lights, trees, Santa Claus?

12. I want to take our time this morning together to share with you the purpose of Christmas.
13. Christmas can be summed up in one phrase in the Bible which is found in John 1:14.
14. Here the apostle John says, “And the Word became flesh.”
15. This is “the most concise biblical statement of the Incarnation...The four words with which it begins, *the Word became flesh*, expresses the reality that in the Incarnation God took on humanity; the infinite became finite; eternity entered time; the invisible became visible (cf. Col.1:15); the Creator entered His creation” (John MacArthur, John 1-5, 39).
16. “He became that which, first became through Him” (Marvin Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament).
17. The word “became” (egeneto), means He “took to Himself” (The Bible Knowledge Commentary). It “emphasizes Christ’s taking on humanity” (MacArthur).
18. The word “flesh” (sarx) is a reference to “the whole man” (Brown) even though it is used in the NT in other ways.
19. God became flesh—that’s the Christmas story.
20. ***Christmas has only one purpose—to reveal a Savior has come.***

## **I. Christmas Has Only One Purpose**

### **A. To Reveal a Savior Has Come**

According to the Gospels, The gospel is to encompass the entire story of redemption beginning with the birth of Christ.

#### **1. The announcement (Luke 2:8-14)**

##### **a) It came from the angel of the Lord to shepherds**

“If you were a modern public relations agent in charge of getting out the news of Christ’s birth, the last group you would have picked to be the first to inform would have been a small band of shepherds. Instead, you likely would have targeted the influencers, the real movers and shakers. You might have considered telling the high priest first, because he was the religious leader of the nation. Or you might have weighed the advantages of going first to the chief priest and scribes, the leading teachers in Israel. On the other hand, you might have thought it smart to go first to the Sanhedrin, the body of seventy elders that was the theocratic leadership of Israel. Or you might have insisted on informing the Pharisees first. After all, they were the religious fundamentalists who were very strict about Old Testament prophecies and looked forward to the Messiah’s arrival. You

might even have wanted to send an official press release to Caesar Augustus to make sure he knew the true Savior had recently come into the world. But none of those alternatives was God's option for revealing the news of Christ's birth. Instead, He first took the special message to one of the unlikeliest classes of people imaginable, an obscure group of shepherds" (John MacArthur, *God in the Manger*, pp.70-71).

1 Corinthians 1:27 says, "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong."

b) Shepherds were social outcasts

Matthew Henry writes that "Shepherds were...outcasts in Israel. Their work not only made them ceremonially unclean, but it kept them away from the temple for weeks at a time so that they could not be made clean."

Their job was seven days a week which made it hard for them to keep the Sabbath. The Pharisees did not like this. They despised them.

2. Their reaction (Luke 2:15-20)

- a) They reasoned among themselves (v.15)
- b) They believed what they heard (vv.15-16)
  - (1) They knew this was something “the Lord has made known unto us” (v.15)
  - (2) This therefore brought about a swift response

Verse 9 says, “they were terribly frightened” at the appearance of the angel. The word “frightened” or “afraid” is the Greek word phobea. It means “to give flight.”

Instead of running in fear they ran in anticipation.

- (a) It says they “came with haste”
- (b) They found Mary, Joseph and the baby after a careful search.

“These shepherds are good examples for us to imitate today. They received by faith the message God sent them and then responded with immediate obedience. After finding the Baby, they reported the good news to others” (Warren Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary).

c) They made it known to others (vv.17-20)

“Made known the statement.”

The word “statement” is the Greek word *rhema*. This refers to a “specific statement,” “what is said,” “a saying.”

It occurs in Matthew 26:75 where Peter remembers the specific statement Jesus said to him, “Before a cock crows, you will deny Me three times.”

It also occurs two times in Luke 9:44-45 which says, “Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. 45 But they did not understand this *statement*, and it was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this *statement*.”

It is translated “saying” in Luke 20:26.

Probably the best known verse is Romans 10:17, which says, “ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the *word* of Christ.”

What is the specific statement the shepherds made known? Verse 11, “For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

- (1) Evangelism is a matter of seeing Jesus and making His presence known to everyone (v.17)
- (2) Though we can't see Jesus physically we can see Him spiritually in His Word
  - (a) Their declaration came after they confirmed what they were told by the angel
  - (b) Our faith is not blind but is confirmed by God's Word

- (1) The Bible says Jesus would be born in Bethlehem:

Mat.2:1 - "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem."

Mic.5:2 - But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting.

- (2) The Bible says Jesus would be born of a virgin:

Isa.7:14 - Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

(Quoted in Mat.1:23)

Lk.1:26-27 - Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.

Lk.1:31 - “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus.”

(3) The Bible says Jesus is God (Jn.1:1)

(4) The Bible says Jesus is Lord (Phil.2:9-11)

(3) Our duty is no different than the shepherds — we are to “(make) widely



known the saying” (Lk.2:17)

- (a) Mat.28:19-20
- (b) Mat.24:14 - And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.
- (c) Mk.16:15 - Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.
- (d) Lk.24:46-47 - Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

The apostles obeyed the command to preach the Gospel (Acts 2:14; 3:11; 4:8-12; 5:42).

Richard Baxter says, “Oh, if you have the hearts of Christians or of men in you, let them yearn towards your poor ignorant, ungodly neighbors. Alas, there is but a step between them and death and hell; many hundred diseases are waiting ready

to seize on them, and if they die unregenerate, they are lost for ever. Have you hearts of rock, that cannot pity men in such a case as this? If you believe not the Word of God, and the danger of sinners, why are you Christians yourselves? If you do believe it, why do you not bestir yourself to the helping of others? Do you not care who is damned, so you be saved? If so, you have sufficient cause to pity yourselves, for it is a frame of spirit utterly inconsistent with grace. . . . Dost thou live close by them, or meet them in the streets, or labor with them, or travel with them, or sit and talk with them, and say nothing to them of their souls, or the life to come? If their houses were on fire, thou wouldst run and help them; and wilt thou not help them when their souls are almost at the fire of hell?" (The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations).

B. To Manifest Our Obedience As Believers

1. Evangelism is a matter of love
  - a) God revealed His love to us by sending Jesus to die in our place (Jn.3:16)
  - b) You reveal your love for sinners by telling

them the Good News

Richard Baxter says, “Methinks if by faith we did indeed look upon them as within a step of hell, it would more effectually untie our tongues” (The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations).

There are 5 words for boldness: “Open your mouth and speak.”

Galatians 4:12-16 - Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all. 13 You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. 14 And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. 15 What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

2. Evangelism is a matter of obedience to God
  - a) Acts 4:18-20 - So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right

in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

- b) Acts 5:28-29 - "...Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."
- c) Acts 8:4 - Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word.

## II. Christmas Has Only One Challenge

- A. As Believers, Our Challenge is to Evangelize
- B. As Unbelievers, the Challenge is to Believe
- C. What Will You Do?

"Here's a side to the Christmas story that isn't often told: those soft little hands, fashioned by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb, were made so that nails might be driven through them. Those baby feet, pink and unable to walk, would one day walk up a dusty hill to be nailed to a cross. That sweet infant's head with sparkling eyes and eager mouth was formed so that someday men might force a crown of thorns onto it. That tender body, warm and soft, wrapped in swaddling clothes, would one day be ripped open by a spear. Jesus was born to die" (John MacArthur, *God With Us*, p.116).

1. The Person of the Christmas story

a) He is revealed by His name

Matthew 1:21 says, “And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”

- (1) “Jesus” occurs 700 times in the Gospels, 100 times in the epistles and Revelation” (Francis Derk, The Names of Christ, 26).

It is the Greek equivalent of Jehua, or Jehoshua, which means, “Jehovah (yahweh) saves.”

John MacArthur says, “God chose the name Jesus for His Son because its basic meaning defined the fundamental, overarching purpose for the Son’s coming to earth...The baby Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and birth to in the plan of God would grow up to testify to the Father’s salvation and would Himself be that salvation. By His own sacrificial death on the cross and triumphant resurrection from the grave He would save His own—all those who are drawn from sin to repentance and who receive faith to embrace His atoning work” (God’s Gift of Christmas, 19).

(2) “Christ” (Christos) is the Greek form of the Hebrew Mashiah which means, “anointed One.” It occurs 49 times in the Gospels, 235 times in the epistles and Revelation (Ibid., Derk).

b) He is revealed in His Person (Mat.1:21)

“...it is He who will save His people from their sins.”

Lehman Strauss writes, “On that first Christmas day when Mary’s babe was born in Bethlehem, divinity was clothed upon with the garb of human flesh, the Infinite and the finite came in inseparable union in the Person of Jesus Christ, the God-man. Therefore Jesus is divine because He is God. Throughout the New Testament we find it repeatedly stated that Christ possessed the attributes of deity and these divine attributes ascribed to Him are applicable to God alone” (The Second Person, 23).

(1) Colossians 2:9 says, “For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form.”

(2) Jesus said to Phillip in John 14:9, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”

2. The paradox of the Christmas story

What is true of God is also true of the Son. They share the same attributes.

a) God is Savior

- (1) Isa.43:11 says, “I, even I, am the LORD; And there is no savior besides Me.”
- (2) Hosea 13:4 says, “Yet I have been the LORD your God Since the land of Egypt; And you were not to know any god except Me, For there is no savior besides Me.”

b) Jesus is Savior

- (1) Matthew 18:11 says, “For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.”
- (2) Luke 2:11 says, “For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

c) God is Immutable

Malachi 3:6 says, “For I, the Lord, do not change.”

d) Jesus is Immutable

Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ the same

yesterday and today, yes and forever.”

e) God is Omnipotent

God said to Pharaoh in Exodus 9:16, “But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.”

f) Jesus is Omnipotent

Hebrews 1:1-3 says, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

g) God is Omniscient

Genesis 6:5 says, “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”



h) Jesus is Omniscient

Matthew 9:1-4 says, “And getting into a boat, He crossed over, and came to His own city. 2 And behold, they were bringing to Him a paralytic, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Take courage, My son, your sins are forgiven." 3 And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes." 4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?”

I) God is Omnipresent

Psalm 139:7-8 says, “Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there.”

j) Jesus is Omnipresent

Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 28:19-20, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

k) God forgives sin

Isaiah 43:25 says, “I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.”

1) Jesus forgives sin

Matthew 9:2 says, “Take courage, My son, your sins are forgiven.”

John 8:11 (the woman caught in adultery),  
“Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more.”

## CONCLUSION

1. Are you celebrating the real meaning of Christmas or are you caught up in all the pagan trappings?
2. This day is about Christ not Santa.
3. Santa Claus is not God. He is a myth.
4. Why do you want to teach your children a lie?
5. You say, “We teach the truth about Santa Claus?”
6. What is the truth about Him?
7. That he “miraculously restored three little boys to life after they had been cut up for bacon”?

8. Or that he was said to have “given three bags of gold to the daughters of a poor man so that the girls would not have to earn their dowries through prostitution”?
9. The idea of Santa Claus was made popular in America by Clement Moore an American poet who wrote “A Visit from St. Nicholas” in 1822 which begins with the famous line, “‘Twas the night before Christmas.”
10. Since that publication, St. Nicholas or Santa Claus has been popular ever since as a fat man dressed in a red suit who judges whether kids are good or bad and brings toys down a chimney led by reindeer on the eve of December 24th.
11. Blowthetrumpet.org has a video on Godtube that Richard McGuire sent me.
12. After viewing it, I wrote down what it says about Santa Claus.
13. “To millions he is the most venerated and adored person in the world. Churches host parties featuring him. Parents speak of his exploits. They pray to him. They seek his blessing and his favor.

He resides at the north pole. He travels by night. His chariot drawn by magical beasts.

He judges the good and the bad. He writes their name in a book. His vesture is red. His hair is white as snow. And when he comes he descends into fire.

Who is he? And where did he come?

Santa Claus comes from St. Nicolas, the one who was most nearly in accord with the dim tradition of Saturn as the hero of the Saturnalia.

World Book Encyclopedia says, “The belief that Santa enters the house through the chimney developed from an old Norse legend. The Norse believed that the goddess Hertha appeared in the fireplace and brought good luck to the home. Druid homeowners would leave a treat consisting of milk and pastries to appease this god who came down the chimney into their fireplace.”

But who is he?

The Oxford English Dictionary calls him “the devil.” Besides the name Satan, he is also called Beelzebub, Lucifer...and in popular rustic speech by many familiar terms as “Old Nick.”

14. Let's compare Santa with Jesus.

**Santa**: Children long his arrival.

**Jesus**: Believers long his arrival (John 14:1-3).

**Santa**: He judges the good and the bad.

**Jesus**: Acts 17:30-31 says, “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in

which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

**Santa**: He writes their name in a book.

**Jesus**: Jesus said to the church at Sardis in Revelation 3:5, “He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life.”

This book is called “the book of life of the Lamb” in Revelation 13:8 and “the Lambs book of life” in Revelation 21:27.

**Santa**: His vesture is red. His hair is white as snow.

**Jesus**: Revelation 1:12-16 describes Jesus: “ And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; 13 and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. 14 And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; 15 and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. 16 And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.”

**Santa**: And when he comes he descends into fire.

**Jesus:** 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout.”

Acts 1:11 says, “This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

15. Do you see the problems with Santa?
16. He is made out to be God!
17. And many of you teach this to your kids.
18. Teach them *the real meaning of Christmas*—that God became flesh and dwelt among us for the purpose of demonstrating a perfect, righteous life, and to die as a substitution for our sins.
19. He is the reason for it all!!
20. So it’s not “Happy Holidays.”
21. It’s “Merry CHRISTmas!”
22. Let’s pray.