

DECEMBER 9, 2012

REDISCOVERING CHRISTMAS

If you googled Christmas, you would find several definitions one of which is stated as the annual commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ and another stating that it is a civil holiday in many of the world's nations.

Over the years, Christmas has become an advertising playground. They have slowly shifted the attention of the world from its true meaning into a fiesta of ads for toys, movies, clothes, food so much so that Christmas has now become this chaotic whirlwind of parties and shopping but behind the laughter and the smiles — do we really remember what Christmas is about?

When you start stripping off all the trappings of Christmas — the gifts, the tree, the parties, the food, the clothes, the mythical figures . . . And you return to the very core and very beginning of the reason why we celebrate this day we will find that there is more reason to celebrate even without all the trappings.

In Matthew 1:18 to 2:4, is the story of Christmas.

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about¹: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet² did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,³ because he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"⁴ (which means "God with us"). When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi⁵ from the east came to Jerusalem² and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

Four titles of Christ:

1. Jesus (1:21)
2. Immanuel (1:23)
3. King (2:2)
4. Messiah (2:4)

JESUS : God's power to save mankind from eternal damnation (Lk 2:11; Mk 10:45; Lk 19:10; Eph 1:7)

Daily we find ourselves worrying about loneliness, pain, sadness, depression and trials but often forget that there is one thing that should worry us above all these — the penalty for our sins. Because of our sins, we are candidates for eternal damnation. In the Jewish tradition, they would spend one whole day to atone for their sins—the day of Yom Kippur (day of Atonement), this is described in Leviticus 6. But on Christmas day, 2000 years ago God changed all that when He sent us His Son to be the perfect sacrificed offering that would deliver us from eternal death and hell. That is the power in the name of Jesus.

We go about wallowing in self pity and depression because we have chosen to believe that the trials and the setbacks that we are experiencing are just too hard and too painful. We have forgotten that these earthly trials are fleeting and temporary; but if we chose to continue to live in our sin then we are facing an eternal punishment that can no longer be reversed.



380 S. Rosemead Blvd
Pasadena, CA 91107

Sundays
945 AM
Heart
Preparation

1000 AM
WORSHIP

Dgroup Schedules

Tuesdays
700 pm
1102 E Swanee Lane
West Covina, CA

Thursdays
730 pm
2617 N Parish Place
Burbank, CA

Fridays
700 pm
5124 Ashworth St
Lakewood, CA

Fridays
730 PM
4706 Ivar Ave
Rosemead, CA

Please contact Rey Bejerano at
6263545717 for venue changes

If we can find comfort and joy in experiencing a break in the storms of life or a breakthrough in our trials — then shouldn't we find greater comfort and cause for rejoicing in the knowledge and understanding that Jesus has come, has overcome the world and has chosen to save us from eternal punishment.

IMMANUEL : God live with us (Is 7:14; Heb 2:17-18; Heb 4:15)

Immanuel is the Christ who has lived with us, the Christ who took human form in order to experience what we experience — pain, betrayal, sorrow, rejection — when we cry out to Him in our moment of hurt and confusion, He can understand and can sympathize with how we feel . . . Because He knows how it feels. Immanuel is the Christ who understands our human nature. He understands our struggles, our temptations, our fears. Hebrews 2:17-18 tells us that **For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.**

We can find comfort in this. We can find mercy and sympathy in the name of Immanuel.

KING: He is King (Matt 2:2; Rev 12:5; Rev 19:11-16)

Christ is the King of kings, He is the Lord of lords. He came not only to save us from our sins, not only to sympathize and help us but He also came to rule. As we celebrate His birth, we must also remember that there will be a time that He will return no longer a helpless infant but He will return in all His power and glory to judge and to rule. (Revelations 19:11-16)

Christ is the King of kings — but have we made Him King over us? Or do we present to Him other kings we have in our lives? Do we have other lords in our lives?

We can find reassurance in the King-ship of Jesus. His king-ship reminds us that He has power and control over all things in our life. Over all our trials, confusions, hurts and pains. His king-ship reminds us that there will be a time when there will be no more weeping and wailing because He is reigning over the world.

MESSIAH : the anointed originator of life (Jn 1:1-3; Jn 11:25-26; Jn 14:19; Ps 36:9)

Messiah is the source of our life. He is the original source of life. This is the reason why Jesus came — to give us life. To save us from sin and give us new life and share eternity with Him.

We can find hope in our Messiah. Even though we cannot see a clear path before us, even though we think our life has no direction — all we really have to do is to look to Him, to surrender to Him, to depend on Him and He will help us find our way home to Him.

With these in mind — understanding what the names/titles of Jesus are and the promises that come with each name — isn't there a greater reason for us to rejoice other than because of the frivolities and trivialities of the trappings of Christmas. When we begin to understand and take into perspective that Christmas is the day that God gave us a Savior from eternal death, the day that God's mercy and love was made into human form so that He can sympathize with our weakness and frailties, the day that God's kingship and promise of hope was given to us; and the day that we were given new life through Jesus Christ — should we not venture to make everyday Christmas day? A day to remember God's love and mercy. God's power and might. God's promise and salvation.

The sad thing about being trapped in the frivolities of Christmas today is that we lose God's presence and message of love — drowned in a sea of parties and shopping — all of which are fleeting joys whereas God's message of Jesus Christ being born is a cause of eternal joy and comfort, a source of encouragement and hope as we continue to journey this life. So should we not attempt to make everyday Christmas day in order to experience God's presence daily in our life or do we want to go on living with the absence of God's glory?

Christmas is really God's presence, God's power, God's grace to make the dead live; to make the fallen, rise; to give the condemned forgiveness; to give the hurting, healing; to give the troubled, peace and the desperate hope.

God became man as our Jesus, our Immanuel, our King and our Messiah. . . To save us from eternal death, to be with us and understand our human nature, to have remind us of His power and rule and to give us new life and hope. But we can only experience this if we claim it and if we make it real in our lives by believing and receiving God as our personal Jesus, as our Immanuel, as our King and as our Messiah.

WORKS: Journaling task



My Christmas Tree.

* on each ball write down one thing that distracts you from the true meaning of Christmas. Add as many balls as you need.

Answer truthfully.

1. What does Christmas really mean to me?
2. What keeps me busy during this time of the year?
3. Where am I now at this time in my life? What are my struggles? Worries?
4. What does the name JESUS mean in my life?
5. What does the name IMMANUEL mean in my life?
6. What does the name KING mean in my life?
7. What does the name MESSIAH mean in my life?

After meditating on the message of "Rediscovering Christmas" what are my insights and learnings that I can use to grow, understand and apply to the discipleship process.

SUPREME LOVE OF GOD

STUDY & DEVOTION TO GOD'S WORD

SELF DENIAL

CHRIST-LIKE LOVE
