

The Gospel of John

Christmas Through the Eyes of John

John 1:1-18

INTRODUCTION:

When the world considers the celebration of Christmas they think of Christmas trees filled with ornaments and lights, gifts and toys under the tree, the mistletoe, Santa Claus finding out who is naughty and nice, frosty the snowman, Jack Frost nipping at your nose, chestnuts roasting on an open fire, Santa's sleigh, Rudolph the red nosed reindeer, outdoor decorations and lights, Black Friday, and the list goes on and on.

As Christians, many people think that the Christmas story is only found in the Gospel accounts from Matthew and Luke. They reflect on all the traditional images of Christmas including Joseph and the virgin Mary, Bethlehem, an innkeeper, Jesus being born in a manger, sheep, shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night, angels, the wise men, the star of the East, and King Herod.

This is the traditional message that many churches will be preaching today. And it is a wonderful story that everyone needs to hear.

But what many people do not consider is that John's Gospel holds a Christmas story as well. John's gospel approaches the story differently. We find in John no mention of a travel weary young family, an innkeeper with no room in the inn, a manger, angels, shepherds, or wise men.

Instead of providing the historical details of Jesus' birth, John provides the **true** meaning of the Christmas story. This is why I love John's account of Christmas.

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 1:1-18 (NASB)

The Deity of Jesus Christ

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

The Witness John

6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John (the Baptist). 7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light.

⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Word Made Flesh

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John *testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’” ¹⁶ For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

Prayer

What does John’s Christmas story tell us?

John tells us that Christmas is really a celebration of the **incarnation** of Christ. Since I do not want Neal to remind me that the word "incarnation" is cliché, I will break it down into simple language.

Christmas is about God becoming flesh and blood in the Person of Jesus Christ. God stepped into human history by allowing Jesus to be born as a human; to walk among us and teach us the truth of God; and rescue us from sin and death.

We read the “Christmas Story” in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Although you will not find that narrative in the Gospel of **John**, you **will** find Christ's **incarnation**, His **purpose for coming**, and **His Christmas gift to you**.

So, here is a different twist on Christmas – **Christmas through the eyes of John**.

BODY:

I. THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all begin their stories with the birth of Jesus. John takes us back through eternity and tells us of the real beginning of Christ.

John 1:1-2 (NASB)

The Deity of Jesus Christ

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was in the beginning with God.

Perhaps the most important truth that John provides concerning Christmas is found in John 1:14. In this verse, John goes back to verse 1 to pick up on one of his favorite themes, **the Word**.

John 1:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ And **the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us**, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

God became flesh and blood and lived among us. The infinite became finite. Eternity entered into time. The invisible became visible. The Creator entered His own creation. Although God became fully man through the person of Jesus, Jesus remained fully God.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION.

But the purpose of the Incarnation was not just to experience life in human form, to taste food, or to feel sorrow. The Son of God came in the flesh in order to be the Savior of mankind.

First, it was necessary to be born “under the law”.

Galatians 4:4-5 (NASB)

⁴ But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

All of us have failed to fulfill God’s Law. We are all sinners. Christ came in the flesh, under the Law, to fulfill the Law on our behalf.

Second, it was necessary for the Savior to shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 10:11-13 (NASB)

¹¹ Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.

A blood sacrifice, of course, requires a body of flesh and blood. God planned the Incarnation for that very reason. Without the Incarnation, Christ could not really die, and the cross would be meaningless.

The cross is also meaningless for those who are not willing to hear the truth proclaimed by Christ and believe.

John 14:23-24 (NASB)

²³ ... “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. ²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.

The core truth of Christmas is that God came and dwelt among us. The very God who gave us life came and became one of us.

What should this tell us?

It should tell us that God is concerned about the human race. God is a loving and caring God who was not willing to leave humanity as it is, but desires to save it.

Which brings us to the final point.

III. OUR CHRISTMAS GIFT FROM CHRIST

John cites several gifts that are given to us due to our belief in Christ. One of the gifts is grace and truth.

Grace is receiving blessings from God that we do not deserve. Nothing within us says, "I am worthy of God's love and mercy ." Rather, God gives us something that we do not deserve: becoming a child of God and salvation.

John 1:9-13 (NASB)

⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

God loved us so much that He allowed Jesus to die on the cross for our sins and give us salvation. A salvation that grants us the privilege to live with Him for eternity if we but believe in His Son and practice the truth.

John 3:16-21 (NASB)

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

God did His part by sacrificing His own Son on the cross for us. This act of love only has value for those who are willing to surrender their lives over completely for Christ. We must love God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind, and all your strength.

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

While many will be inundated with the commercialism that surrounds Christmas, it is a good practice for us all to remember God's grace during this time. We don't deserve the love of God. But since God is loving, he came to save us from ourselves.

CONCLUSION:

Often, we become obsessed with finding the accurate date of Christ's birth. We spend countless hours discriminating between those things that appear pagan in our celebrations, while failing to ponder on the most important truth behind Christmas.

The real Christmas story is the story of God becoming a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ.

God did an incredible work in sending His only begotten Son into the world and providing us with a salvation we do not deserve. Praise the Lord for that moment in which “the Word became flesh.”

We are now redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

1 Peter 1:18-21 (NASB)

¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. ²⁰ For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you ²¹ who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Why did God do such a thing?

Because He loves us!

Why was Christmas necessary?

Because we needed a Savior!

Why do we celebrate Christmas each year?

Out of gratitude for what God did for us, we remember His birth by giving each other gifts, worshipping Him, and being especially conscious of the poor and less fortunate.

The true meaning of Christmas is embedded in love. God loved His own and provided a way—the only Way—for us to spend eternity with Him. He gave His only Son to take our punishment for our sins. He paid the price in full, and we are free from condemnation when we accept that free gift of love.

John 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

God left the portals of heaven and dwelled in a physical body among us. He came to save us. He came to love us. He came to show us the truth.

Have a **MERRY CHRISTMAS** by making it **ALL ABOUT JESUS!**

Go Tell it on the Mountain.