

The Examiners

Examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so... Acts 17:11

THE NIGHT JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN

"Christmas" supposedly celebrates the unique and incomparable divine gift to all mankind, the birth of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. The Lamb of God and the only Savior who takes away the sin of the world.

The birth of Christ did not take place on the month of December (see The Examiners Vol. 1 No. 1 – December 2001). However, the month is not important as much as the reality and purpose of His birth. He was born to die so that through Him we might have life everlasting. The babe in the manger would demolish the barrier between sinful and depraved humanity and perfect God.

Unfortunately, someone and something take over the place of Christ, abolishing the true meaning of Christ's birth. Santa Claus for example supplanted Christ. Shopping and the preparation for delectable foods replace the spiritual happiness brought by the Savior Himself. Exchange gifts have diverted our focus away from the greatest Gift. The so-called Christmas the world has known could never be the birth of Jesus Christ.

Eight things that make distinctions the night Christ was born from any other nights. The night Christ was born was **a night of life and death.**

"And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger" (Luke 2:7a). The babe in the manger was the Son of God made flesh and dwelt among men (John 1:2, 14). He is the God-Man undiminished deity and the only perfect humanity united in one Person forever (Colossians 2:9). Christ is eternal God, but His incarnation began with His physical birth as all human life begins.

At birth, Jesus Christ was wrapped in swaddling clothes, the garments used to shroud the dead. From the beginning of His earthly life He was identified with death. The shadow of the cross loomed over Him from the very moment He was born. At His birth, God proclaimed to the entire world that Christ's death is more significant than His life.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Thirty-three years later the Lord Jesus Christ bore all our sins (past, present, and future) when He died on the cross.

"And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24a). The unique birth of Christ is God's proclamation of the unique death of Christ on the cross. "Christmas" is Christ with His cross. Santa Claus has nothing to do with the birth of Christ. The night Christ was born was **a night of good news.**

"And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. "And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger (Luke 2:10-12).

The supernatural appearance of the angel rendered these shepherds speechless with fear and awe. But the good news declaring that salvation from God was brought down to man promptly transformed their fear to awe-inspiring joy. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). The only genuine message of "Christmas" is the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The good news concerned the Savior, Christ Jesus the Lord because all humanity is under the penalty or wages of sin, which is separation from God (Romans 3:23). The proclamation of the birth of Christ is the announcement of the solution to sin. The advent of Christ as true humanity was for the purpose of saving mankind from the very penalty of sin.

The angels brought the good news for all people of all ages, and there is no exception. Salvation was provided for all since the substitutionary death of Christ is unlimited atonement.

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

A wish for a "Merry Christmas" is absolutely nonsense without the Gospel of salvation believed and received.

The night Christ was born was **a night of heavenly worship.**

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:13).

On the night Christ was born the elect angels set the precedent for Church Age believer's worship of God. True worship is based on a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Most people have long ignored such precedent. The celebration of the birth of Christ should elicit a personal response and adoration of Him. The genuine spirit of Christmas is based on personal faith in the God-Man Jesus Christ.

"And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31).

The night Christ was born was **a night of potential peace** (with God).

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men! (Luke 2:14). But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6) Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Romans 5:1).

Your mental attitude towards Jesus Christ is the only factor whether you have peace with God or none. God is well pleased only with those who believe in Jesus Christ. Only they are the ones who have a peace that cannot be purchased.

The night Christ was born was **a night of reverent seeking.**

"So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us" (Luke 2:15-16).

Those shepherds were not ordinary and the sheep were not ordinary. The shepherds were carefully chosen to watch over the flocks from which lambs without blemish were selected for Temple sacrifice. The sacrifices foreshadowed Jesus Christ as the true Lamb of God.

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

The shepherds who tended the flocks night and day could not attend Temple worship, yet the angels revealed the good news to them. Not to their religious leaders. The fact that they went immediately to Bethlehem, exhibited their faith in God. They accepted the good news with faith.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

The shepherds left the sacrificial lambs to witness the greatest event of their lives, the birth of the Lamb of God, the Savior of all mankind. Leaving the sheep was very dangerous thing to do, but Christ was more important to them than anything else. They went to seek the Lord:

Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near (Isaiah 55:6). Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2b). And he who come to Me I will in no way cast out (John 6:37b).

In contrast, the pious religious leaders of Israel, who attended the Temple worship three times a day, responded in disbelief and rejection of the good news (Matthew 2:4-6). What is more important to you?

The night Christ was born was **a night of witnessing**.

" Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things, which were told them by the shepherds (Luke 2:17-18).

People were amazed and speechless when they heard that the Messiah had come. The shepherds made the salvation message very clear.

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him" (John 3:36).

No experience in the Christian life that can bring the greatest joy than the experience of presenting the Gospel to others. Even angels in heaven rejoice whenever a sinner believe and receive the free gift of salvation.

The night Christ was born was **a night of quiet reflection**.

But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19).

Mary, the mother of Jesus set the biblical precedent for remembering the birth of Christ, which is by quiet reflection of truth. Christmas celebration by expensive festivity and sumptuous cuisine has nothing to do with the birth of Christ. People are excited in counting the number of days before the pagan festival they called Christmas but minus the thought of the Savior.

The night Christ was born was **a night of rejoicing and thanksgiving**.

Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them (Luke 2:20).

Real worship of God is a mental attitude not an outburst of emotion. Real worship demands three things: salvation, on the part of the worshipper, Scriptures in the souls of the believers, and a Spirit-filled life. You cannot hide genuine thanksgiving and the peace that surpasses all understanding.

From His **birth - day** - came His **death day**, and through His death day comes our **eternal life day**.

"Out of the darkness of sin and despair. God's salvation, the fairest of fair, was born in a manger". The little baby in the manger had two natures; a divine nature and a human nature. The divine nature was perfect in every way and was eternal God. The human nature was genuine and real, and yet without sin.

These two natures are inseparably united, yet without the loss of their separate identity. The human nature of Christ will always be the human nature, and the divine nature will always be the divine nature. Christ is both God and Man in one Person forever. He is no less God because of His humanity, and He is no less humanity because of His deity. He is the only unique Person, the God-Man forever.

The Son of God had to become a man to be the Savior, to be able to die. He must become true humanity to be the High Priest, as well as the Mediator. He must have a human body to fulfill the Davidic Covenant to occupy the throne of David forever.

The birth of Christ brought 3 radical changes in the woman, in the Son of God and in the lives of sinners.

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14).

The only possible way that Jesus Christ, the eternal God, could come into the world as a man without sin was by the Virgin Birth. Thus, 1 Timothy 3:15 say that the woman shall be saved by means of childbearing, that is, the bearing of one particular Child through the virgin birth. The miracle was the virgin birth, not the virginity of the woman. The miracle was the power of God in bringing into the world the Son of God through the womb of a virgin, incapable of bearing a child without a man.

To come in the flesh, in the likeness of sinful man, yet without sin, was the will of God the Father. As eternal God, Jesus Christ could not pay the penalty of sin because God is eternal, immutable and not subject to death. He had to have a human body with human nature, but He had to be not only true humanity but also perfect humanity. Therefore, the virgin birth is the only way.

By means of radical change (a change that only God has the power to do) in the virgin who bore a Child without human father, God prepared the second radical change in the Son of God who became a Man.

"But (Christ) emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:7-8).

If a sinner is to have fellowship with God and be qualified to live in His presence forever, there must be a radical change. In God's sight, no human being is righteous except the perfect humanity of Christ.

As it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, All have turned aside, together they have become useless; As it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:10-12, 23).

To be in right relationship with God, man must not only have his sins forgiven, but also he must also be as good as God. We do not have that kind of righteousness and we cannot have such kind of righteousness by ourselves. We need the spiritual change that only the spiritual birth can bring. This is not by human good works or effort to be right before God.

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, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12-13).

Salvation is the complete work of God; man has no part on it. There is nothing we can add or contribute to the finished work of Christ. Only the work of Christ is acceptable before God because He is perfect and without sinful nature. Man can only accept or reject the free gift of salvation.

God in his grace has provided everything necessary for man to have eternal life, the forgiveness of sins, and to have fellowship with Him. But this grace is no avail until we receive it by faith.

But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him (Jesus Christ) who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness (Romans 4:5)

"Christmas" is the story of Christ's death not of His birth.



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