

Questions At Christmas – Various Scriptures

I'm glad you've chosen to worship with us on this special occasion, as we celebrate the birth of Christ; It really is a wonderful time of the year
And I trust that God will do a special work in your heart, as we open up his Word and ask some important questions at Christmas; Mt 1 (p.807)

- Questions at Christmas are really nothing new if you think about it (**Intro**)
They've been asked from the get-go
Like when the wise men asked King Herod – *Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?* (Mt 2:2)
Or when Mary asked the angel who told her she would give birth to a son – *How will this be, since I am a virgin?* (Lk 1:34); *Questions* at Christmas are as *old* as Christmas

Even our Christmas carols ask questions; Like – “What Child is this who, laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping? What child is this whom angels greet with anthems sweet . . . While shepherds watch are keeping?”

And if you're a college student coming home for Christmas break, there's even more
Like – Who are your friends? And do you like your roommate? Have you had any dates?
Have you found that special someone? Are you thinking about marriage?
Those usually come from your mom, while your dad chimes in with questions about your grades, and whether you found a job, and if you're ever going to graduate
Questions at Christmas abound

But more often than not, we never get to the important ones – the ones that *need* to be asked; and the answers to which have *eternal implications*
So no matter who you are this Christmas – student, parent, or otherwise . . .
I'd like to ask you some questions; Starting with one *about* Christmas

And that is . . .

Have you considered the facts?

Have you considered the *facts* of *Christmas*?

I ask, b/c you might be among the many who think of Christmas as just a story – a fictional account intended to perpetuate a religious institution, or give people hope
Some people think that
Others are so wrapped up in their lives, they've never given it a second thought

But look at Mt 1:18-25 – *Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way* [IOW here are the facts]. *When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.*

Those are the facts of Christmas; The very ones that Joseph considered
That Jesus, is God in the flesh – Immanuel; That he was foretold by prophets
That he was conceived of the Holy Spirit; And that he came to save us from our sins
Incredible assertions that, if true, deserve your consideration b/c they have far-reaching implications for your life

- But if you're thinking there's no way, no way they're true – let me ask you something
Do you really think that if somebody were inventing a religion, they'd start with something so *outlandish* as a virgin birth? And the birth of *God* at that?
I don't think so; I mean, who in the world would believe such a thing if it weren't true?

And what about the prophecy from Isaiah 700 hundred years earlier that Matthew cites?
Is it purely coincidental that the birth of Jesus fits that?
If so, what about the other 60+ prophecies that fit him? Are they coincidence too?
Not likely; In fact the chances are so remote that it takes more faith to believe that, than it does to believe this

And Jesus couldn't have *intentionally* fulfilled them all – b/c many of them were totally outside of his control
Like where he was born, and into what family, and where he'd live before age 2
Which means that, far more than just a story, this is a retelling of the facts

The question is, have you considered them as such?
Have you considered that Jesus *is* God in the flesh?
Have you considered that he came into the world to save *you* from your sins?
To be God with *you*? If not, it's a question at Christmas that deserves your consideration

Have you experienced the wonder?

Turn over to Luke 2 (p.857); This is where the **shepherds**, out watching their flocks one night, were suddenly confronted by an angel
Who announced the birth of the Messiah, the Christ – the one for whom they had been waiting so, so long?
And then a **multitude** of angels joined the first – *praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”* (14)
The shepherds experienced the wonder of God, firsthand; The wonder of the divine
B/c God *got* their attention, and they *paid* attention

- And it didn't stop there – they followed through*****
So many people are exposed to the wonder of God in their lives, and either miss it altogether, or do nothing about it
Not the shepherds; Look at v16 – *They went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.*
The saying of the angel, that *unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord* (Lk 2:11); A Savior who is God himself; They made it known

And all who heard it [v18] wondered at what the shepherds told them. All who heard it wondered at the wonder
Once again, God *got* their attention, and they *paid* attention

• Let me ask you something – Is God trying to get your attention these days?
I’m not talking about an angel, though that’s possible
I’m talking about the circumstances of your life
That’s how he most *often* gets our attention – sometimes through blessings, and
friendships, and kindness; And sometimes through hardship, suffering, and defeat
Sometimes it’s with a megaphone, and sometimes an earphone
In fact, C.S. Lewis once said that God whispers in our pleasure, speaks in our
conscience, and shouts in our pain

The question is, are you listening (earphones)? Are you plugged in and paying attention?
Plugged in to the Word? The circumstances of your life? The people around you?
I sometimes pray that God would force moments of quietness on people – so they’d pay
attention and experience the wonder

Or maybe you’re covering your ears and doing your best to ignore him; Is that you?
Constantly occupying yourself with the *busyness* of life, in order to block out the
message of life – the megaphone that won’t go away?
The one that keeps shouting – “Look to me and wonder; Come to me and rest; Believe
in me and live; Trust in me and follow”

Listen, whether it’s a still small voice that you can’t shake, or an earth-shattering event
you can’t ignore, or the sound of our worship inside these doors . . .
Don’t you think it’s about time to start paying attention, and experience the wonder?
Have you experienced the wonder?

Have you seen the light?

Like Simeon did? The elderly man here in Lk 2, who waited all his life to see Jesus, and
when he finally took him in his arms, he said in v29 . . .
*“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; 30 for
my eyes have seen your salvation 31 that you have prepared in the presence of all
peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”*

He saw the light, literally; Just like Isaiah *prophesied* (**Is 9:2,6**)
*The people who walked in darkness [he said] have seen a great light; those who dwelt in
a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone . . . For to us a child is born, to us a
son is given*

Jesus, is the child born, and the son given
The light of whom Isaiah spoke, the light of revelation that Simeon held, and the light
of the world that offers the light of life
Just like he says in **John 8:12** – *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will
not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*
Just like the sun is the light of life for the earth, Jesus is the light of life for our souls
Apart from whom there’s only darkness and death*****

- The question is – Have you seen it? Have you seen the light?
The Light *capital* “L”, and, *yourself* in light of the Light? Have you seen the light?

Have you seen who you are in light of who God is?
Have you seen your sinfulness in light of his holiness?

Have you seen the futility of your thinking compared to the wisdom of his?
Have you seen your emptiness compared to his fullness?
Have you seen your inadequacy in light of his power?

Take a look at this **video** of someone who has (Derek and Bessie Tan) (:55)

Derek saw the light; And his whole life changed
How about you? Have you seen the light? And if so . . .

Have you joined the worship?

What child is this the carol asks? And then answers . . .
This, *this* is *Christ the King*; Whom shepherds guard and Angels sing
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud (praise, honor, worship); The Babe, the Son of Mary

Which is exactly what the wise men did, didn’t they?
They came to Jerusalem *saying*, “*Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For
we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.*”

And after some interactions with King Herod, Matthew says in **2:9-11** of his gospel . . .
*They went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went
before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw
the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house they saw
the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening
their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.*

The wise men went to great lengths, and gave great gifts, at great cost – for what?
To join the worship! They didn’t care how far they had to travel . . .
They didn’t care how much it cost; And they didn’t care how much they gave
They just wanted to worship, b/c they recognized him as the king *****

- Does that describe you?
Do you rejoice *exceedingly with great joy* at the thought of worship? The opportunity to
come to church with God’s people, in God’s place, to sing God’s praise?
Have you ever fallen to your *knees* in worship?
Do you live your life as an act of worship – holy and acceptable to God?

I hope so; B/c God is *looking* for worshippers the Bible says – people who freely
acknowledge who he is, and all that he’s done
People like you and me, for whom he gave his Son, to die for our sins, so that we could
be worshippers
So that we could enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise
So that we could live for him, and overflow with joy – *joy to the world*

- He’s looking, and he’s made a way, and he’s waiting
The God who made you, loves you, came for you, died for you, and lives for you – is
waiting for your worship

But listen – experiencing the wonder, and seeing the light, and joining the worship
requires more than just knowing *about* Jesus, or knowing the facts
It requires knowing *him* – personally; It requires having a personal relationship with him

Which is the *exact* thing he wants with you (:05)

He came to not only save your soul and make you whole, but to knit his heart with yours
To abide in you, and you in him

So the last question this Christmas, is do you know him?

Do you know the Lord?

If you don't, you'll *never* experience the wonder, or see the light, or join the worship
In fact, you'll continue to walk in deep darkness, and end up even worse

- And I say *know* the Lord, b/c Jesus says in **John 10:14** – *I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.*

Jesus knows those who are his; Not just knows about, but knows – from the inside out
Including your thoughts, tendencies, hopes, and fears

He knows *you* like a good shepherd knows his sheep – spending day and night
nurturing, leading, protecting, and feeding them
He knows his own

And his own know *him*; *My own know me* he said; Not just know *about* me, but *know* me
They don't just know the facts, or the story – they know *him*; as one of his own
Adopted into his family as a son or daughter the Bible says
He in them, and they in him; They *know* him*****

- The question is, do *you*? Do you *know* the Lord? *Do* you?
B/c Christianity is not about a religion, but a relationship
A relationship where Jesus comes into your heart (Eph 3:17), and dwells forever
A relationship where he loves you, and you love him
A relationship of service, and blessing, and worship
A relationship of trust, and joy, and hope, and commitment
That's what this book is *about*; It's not about a religion, but a relationship

The question is, do you have it? Do you know the Lord? (**Summary**)

If so, you well know what it means to consider the facts, experience the wonder, see the
light, and join the worship; You're living it; And you can't imagine anything better

But if that's not you, if you don't know the Lord – you can

You can enter into a relationship with him right now; A relationship that lasts forever –
where you too can experience the wonder, see the light, and join the worship
There's no other way, and certainly no better time, than at Christmas

Pray – If you're sitting there and don't know the Lord . . .

Or realize for the first time in your life that you know *about* Jesus, but you don't really
know Jesus

If that's you, and God's been speaking to you, as if through a megaphone . . .

I want to pray with you; And I want *you* to pray to God

B/c he's waiting; And wants nothing more than to save your soul, make you whole, and
enter into a relationship for all eternity

- So in the quietness of your heart, right where you sit, just call out to the Lord, and say
something like this . . .

“Lord, I need you, and want to know you – personally

I'm tired of the loneliness; I'm done w/ my selfishness; And can't ignore you any longer
I commit to follow you and live for you the rest of my days; That's my commitment
So please forgive me of my sin, save my soul, and come into my life
I want to know, and be known, in a relationship with you”

If you just prayed with me, will you just raise your hand and wait for me to acknowledge
you? I'm not going to ask you to stand up, or come forward, or anything like that
I just want to know that you entered into a relationship with Christ just now, so I can
rejoice with you, and pray for you as we close

- Father, you've promised eternal life to those sheep who hear your voice and follow
And that no one will snatch them out of your hand
So I pray that you will protect them in a special way
And point them to your Word; And connect them with our church
And fill them with your Spirit
And bless them with exceeding joy as we come and worship . . .

Merry Christmas – You Are Loved