

What's the Big Deal About Christmas?

Phil 2:5-11

Remember the last time somebody was SO excited about something, and you thought
“What's the big deal?”

Sports – someone traded to another team, the cameras flash, people talk . . .

Showbiz – band coming to town, people are standing in line for tickets . . .

Elections – so and so is coming to town . . .

Why is that? Because we don't fully appreciate of it all

I think that's the case with Christmas

We don't fully appreciate the importance of the event or the person behind it

Not because of lack of belief

90% of Americans believe that Jesus was born on Christmas

But 90% of the people are NOT following Jesus

90% don't realize that it's a big deal

Most probably don't even think about it

They know some of the facts, and even believe it's true . . .

But the importance/significance hasn't sunk in

Which causes them to ask, “What's the big deal?”

Why all the fuss?

Why do all you spiritual types get so excited about it?

In addition to announcing the facts of Christmas . . .

Bible also gives us a clue to why it's such a big deal – Phil 2:5-11

Christmas is a big deal because . . .

- **God became man (v6-8)**

Jesus was fully God and became fully man

6 – *He was in the form of God* – 1st century way of saying he was God, yet distinguishing between him and God the Father

7b-8a – *born in the likeness of men; found in human form*

Likeness and form don't mean that he was something short of fully man

Just a way to indicate that he hadn't always been a man

Gal 4:4 – *When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman*

1 Tim 3:16 – *Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh*

He was formerly God in spirit and now became God in the flesh

In doing so . . .

He gave up so much to become so little

6 – *he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but he made himself nothing* – literally, he emptied himself, not of his deity, but of the rights and privileges and glory of being God

7-8 – *took the form of a servant* – God of the universe became a servant

There's no greater irony nor lowering of oneself in all the world

Heard of those companies that require their executives to work in the factory for a time?

Multiply that by a cajillion and you still fall short of the heights from which God came, and the depths to which he stooped

It's like a prince becoming a frog because he wants to!

Compared to the infinite glory and highest position he gave up, he became nothing

God became man and gave up so much to become so little, so that you would . . .

Trust Him!

He's worthy of your trust – he became one of us!

He's worthy of your trust – he's GOD in the flesh

Can you think of anybody else more worthy of your trust?

Family, friends, business partners . . . who will let you down

People in the Bible – Mary, Paul, or somebody else . . . none of them are God

Other religious heroes – saints of old, leaders of other religions

You can trust them, but it's misplaced and results in disappointment

Or you can trust Jesus – God in the flesh

Just like Simeon – upon seeing the baby Jesus said to God, “My eyes have seen your salvation” (Luke 2:25-32)

Christmas is a big deal because God became man; Trust Him – He's worthy of it

- **His coming was anticipated (v5,11)**

Christ is used here as a proper name, but began as a title

Refers to the Messiah – the Anointed One, Promised One

Used to be Jesus the Christ; or the Lord's Christ (Lk 2:26)

Jesus *the* Christ became Jesus Christ because Jesus was so closely associated with being the Messiah, the Christ

Like Andre the Giant being called Andre Giant because his person is so closely tied and associated with giant-hood

This Christ was longed for/anticipated because it was prophesied that he would come

Is 7:14 – *The Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel* [which means God with us].

Is 9:6 – *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Jer 23:5 – *Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land*

Is 49:5-6 – *And now the LORD . . . who formed me from the womb to be his servant . . . he says: “I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”*

Micah 5:2,4 – *You, O Bethlehem Ephrathah . . . from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days . . . And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD . . . And they shall dwell secure . . . And he shall be their peace.*

A child, a son, someone from the lineage of David, formed from the womb
He would be God with us, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father
Prince of Peace
He will reign, deal wisely, bring justice and righteousness, a light for the nations
The salvation of his people

With prophecies like that, no wonder they anticipated Christ
No wonder people looked for him and sought him out
They could barely contain their anticipation!

What about you?
Are you looking for him?
Do you long for something in life?
Do you have a nagging feeling that you're missing something?

Seek Him!

Seek him for the first time
Shepherds did – Luke 2:15 – *Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.*

Seek him exclusively
Paul did – 1 Cor 2:2 – *I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.*

Seek him in your heart
Rev 3:20 – *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*
[relationship]

Seek him in the Scriptures
Philip did – Jn 1:45 – *We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*
Knew who/what to look for because he had searched the Scriptures

Jesus continues to fulfill the promises of Immanuel, Counselor, Prince of Peace, Savior in the lives of those who seek him
That's why Christmas is a big deal
Christ satisfied the longing and anticipation of people then, and he's still doing so now

Not only that, but look at Phil 2:8 (read it)
Christmas is a big deal because . . .

• He died on a cross (v8)

Are you thinking . . . I thought Christmas was about the *birth* of Jesus, not the *death*
Can't separate them

You and I have a problem apart from trusting Christ – sin and death
Rom 3:23 – *All have sinned and fall short of God's standard of holiness*
The consequences of our sin is death (Rom 6:23)

Fortunately, God provided us with a solution
Rom 5:8 – *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, CHRIST DIED FOR US*
1 Cor 15:3 – *Christ died for our sins*

Jesus – God in the flesh/the anticipated Christ – died for your sins so you wouldn't have to
That's why Christmas is a big deal

The cross was the *goal* of Christmas, the reason Jesus was born . . .
So he could die for the sins of the world, including yours!
Without the cross, Christmas is just a miraculous, feel good story that does us no good
Without Christmas, the cross doesn't exist

You can't separate Christmas from the cross, nor the cross from Christmas
What started with Christ's birth, ended with Christ's death and resurrection

That begs for you to . . .

Believe in Him!

The God-man, the promised one, was humble enough to die for YOUR sins
Are you humble enough to believe in him?
To embrace his death as your death? His resurrection life as your life?
Because without belief, Christ's death for you is moot – it does you no good

Martha believed . . .
John 11:25-27 – *Jesus said to her [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."*

Martha's belief wasn't just a head thing, but a heart thing – so should yours be
Believing in Jesus is not just embracing the facts about Jesus
But personally embracing him – his death as your death, and his life as your life
Not just because you know you should; but because you want to

You know your belief is a heart thing when . . .
It pains you terribly that he died for YOU; that your sin put him on the cross
You feel the ache of your guilt and sin, and long to be relieved of it
You're amazed at the joy/peace that results from asking him to forgive your sins
You want everybody around you to experience the same freedom
You long to be with him in prayer – unbroken, focused communion
You look forward with great anticipation to heaven
You can't imagine living life without Jesus as your constant companion

Do you believe in him? He died on a cross for you.
That's why Christmas is a big deal

• He deserves your worship (v9-11)

He deserves your wholehearted allegiance and foremost focus in life – Because he is Lord

9 – *God has highly exalted him*

Established his superiority; Restored his glory and prominence

9 – *Bestowed on him the name above every name*

Name – title or label or position

The name that is above every name is *Lord* – rightful master, ruler over all

Read v9-11 using title/position for Lord

Very rare up to that point to call a man Lord and treat him as such

It was a name reserved only for God in Jewish circles

Only for Caesars in secular circles

Nobody was called Lord or treated as such, unless they had the right/power to back it up

Jesus does, by virtue of what he did! (life, death, resurrection)

Because he's Lord, he deserves your worship

He deserves your bended knee – your honor, respect, admiration, praise

He deserves for your life to be lived for his sake

He deserves your worship – your wholehearted allegiance and foremost focus

Won't you . . .

Surrender to Him!

Surrender your life to him and his way of living

Stop living for yourself; Living your own way

Start living to bring him glory; to serve him; to love him

Don't miss out on the rewards of giving Christ proper place in your life

You have two choices this side of life:

Surrender to the Lordship of Christ and live life to the full

Keep on fighting it and be miserable

Bob Cunningham – Testimony of someone who surrendered to Jesus recently

What brought you back to God?

How did that happen?

Now that you've surrendered to him, how is your life different?

Think, live, feel

Christmas is a big deal, because Jesus deserves your worship

Won't you surrender to him?

Stop living your way, with yourself as the focus

Start living his way, with him as the focus – He's Lord, he deserves it