

AND GOD SAYS . . .

Sponsored by the Melrose Alliance Church

I believe the true meaning of Christmas is lost in two primary ways— we either over romanticize it or we give it new meaning.

We romanticize it through our pictures and plays. We are shown a little, round faced baby asleep on the hay, happy and sweet with a halo around his head. The manger is a quaint little place that is cleaned and pleasant. The angels are singing, “Peace on earth and good will to men.” And the shepherd’s are worshipping with great joy.

But I wonder if that is really a true picture. Mary and Joseph were travel weary. It was a real ordeal to travel right up until the delivery of the child. It wasn’t a quiet and peaceful setting at all, as the city was of a hub of activity, filled with all kinds of people who had come to pay their taxes. There was drunkenness, shouting, fighting, and all kinds of immorality and crime.

And the peace on earth and good will to men was really not about men getting along with each other so that there wouldn’t be war anymore. The peace that Jesus was about to bring was a greater peace than that. He came to bring peace between sinful mankind and His Father, God. Jesus Himself said that he did not come to give peace as the world does. (John 14:27). Rather God says that we have peace with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ. This was not a romantic little story that took place in Bethlehem— this was God’s plan for waging war on the sinfulness of the world and overcoming it.

We also assign a new meaning to Christmas. We say it is about giving. But it is so much more than that. Furthermore, we distort the whole idea of giving by focusing on what we get for Christmas. Isn’t the number one question asked after Christmas, “What did you *get* for Christmas?” not, “What did you *give* for Christmas?” So you see, even though we say its about giving, it is really about getting.

“What is the true meaning then?” you ask. It is “God with us” setting His eternal plan in motion to rescue us from His wrath to come. It is about God loving us. And this is huge!