

THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

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Does your family celebrate Christmas? Many Christians do not and of course many of the cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses don't as well. I have seen articles for years by certain ministers, mostly Africans, who write that they don't celebrate Christmas because it's a heathen holiday and that if you do you are worshiping heathen gods. Lately on Facebook I've seen others giving various reasons why they don't celebrate Christmas, e.g., because it's not in the Bible and they say if it's not in the Bible then they don't practice it.

Well, I drive a Dodge Ram 2500 pickup truck. It's not in the Bible either but I still drive it. Often I'm tempted to respond to these people with a statement like: "Come on over and see us and we'll cast that religious spirit out of you!" But of course I don't ever respond that way even though they need deliverance.

My wife, Evelyn, teaches often on the Fruit of the Spirit. She is an expert on it (order her book, *The Gifts and Operations of the Holy Spirit*, it will help you immensely). She has taught me a lot about the Fruit of kindness. And the Holy Spirit has as well. I try to be a doer of Paul's words from Col. 4:6,

"Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, so that you know how to answer each person."

I remember T.L. Osborn's words from the pulpit the first time he came to speak at Lakewood Church back about 1980 when I was a member there. He said, "People have been beaten down enough; they don't need your words of criticism to beat them down further."

So, as Paul wrote, we should always pray it before we say it and allow the Holy Spirit to give us words of grace to encourage and uplift people instead of harsh words of criticism even though some of the criticism may be justified.

The last month has been a time of revelation. The Lord has been speaking about the key scriptural principles that are lacking in most of the Church today. As I've

written and preached for over 30 years, the only true picture we have of the Church is found in the Book of Acts which chronicles the birth of the Church at Pentecost. The more you study and meditate in the Book of Acts the more you will learn the secrets of why the early Church was so successful.

Then when the Lord moved us from Texas to Montana in the mid '90s and He began a time of tremendous revelation where I was having 4-5 visions and revelations a day for several years about the false church that Satan has erected, I began to understand that while the New Testament does indeed teach Church doctrine, etc., the main reason most of the epistles were written was to refute the false doctrine of the false church that Satan began to erect as soon as the true Church was born!

So you might ask, "What does any of this have to do with Christmas?" Well, I'm getting to that because it does. Christmas, properly understood, reflects both the heart of the Father and His Son. And you will see this in all of the Kingdom principles that the Lord gave me of which there are 10. Ten is the number of covenant and proper relationship.

And once we know these key Kingdom principles we see them at work throughout the whole Bible. Remember, most Christians and ministers believe that the God of Genesis and the Old Testament—the Creator—is God the Father but as I proved when preaching during Yom Kippur last year, this God is actually Jesus Christ.

The Meaning of Christmas

So this brings us back to the true meaning of Christmas and the key principles that reveal the character and nature of God and the Lord Jesus who the Scriptures teach us is "the exact image" of the Father. For over 40 years I've preached a truth from the Scriptures—"Whenever God wants to change history He births a baby."

Christmas is about the birth of a very special baby, Jesus, the long awaited Messiah and Savior of the world. Now many have said for decades that December 25 cannot be the day on which He was born. Without going into a long discussion about the facts, because they are scarce, let me just say that it could be December 25; it was in this season and nothing rules it out. But to me that's never been important. After all, the main thing is that Jesus was born and we have historical records to prove His birth and death by crucifixion from both secular and Jewish history. So His physical birth was a fact. But the real question then and now for the world still is: "What will you do with Jesus?"

It was prophesied over Him at His dedication in the Temple that He would "reveal hearts" and He is still doing this today. In fact, He reveals our hearts every day even though we may not be aware of it.

But since this is a teaching article and I don't want to write a book about these principles of God, let me just relate some of them to the true meaning of Christmas and why Jesus was born because it's not the reason most Christians believe and are taught.

The key Kingdom principle of Relationship: In 2004 the Lord gave me a message I preached at our church in Libby titled, "The Power of Relationship." I began the message by asking our congregation this question: "Would Jesus do something for me that He wouldn't do for you?" And I've asked this same question in many other churches when preaching there. They always respond in unison the same way, "No!" I then ask, "Why?" And again they always respond in unison the same way (because they've been incorrectly taught), "Because God is no respecter of persons." But that is the incorrect answer. Now admittedly I probably would have answered that question the same way had the Lord not given me the revelation for that message back in 2004 on the Power of Relationship because the correct answer is "Yes, God will do things for me that He won't do for you and the reason why is the Power of Relationship!"

So the main reason God the Father sent His Son Jesus was to restore relationship; He wanted His family back that Satan had stolen. And if you understand this you will also understand why unbelievers cannot inherit eternal life. You are in one of two families on the earth—the family of God or the family of Satan. Since Satan and all rebels will inherit the Lake of Fire as their final resting place if you choose to stay in Satan's family you will inherit eternal hell fire! What a terrible fate!

But praise God you can choose; you are a free moral being and you can choose to change families. Hallelujah! You can choose to change relationships! And when you do then you inherit all that Jesus inherited, PTL! I could write much more about relationship but must move on to another principle but must mention that Jesus, too, made a free choice to come and be sacrificed for the sins of the world because of relationship. As God's Son, He was committed to their relationship and submitted to the will of the Father! And, we too, if we want to be in correct relationship with the Trinity must be committed to be submitted!

Giving (Sowing)—most of what we hear from churches and "ministries" today, especially the Balaam Boys, regarding giving and prosperity is perverted—it's not the truth. It's gimmicks and lies designed to get dumb Christians to give God's money to the Dark Kingdom. I wrote this back in 1991 in the original edition of MSDK and since that time have received much more revelation about it. But a key Kingdom principle is giving—sowing and another principle is reaping which I'll cover later. "God so loved the world that He gave ..." We all know that Scripture; it's the most quoted verse in all the world. But perhaps most Christians have never meditated on it enough to realize its connection to relationship. And if you study the Royal Law you will see the connection between several of these key Kingdom principles. Love is not love unless you give!

Reaping—the Scriptures are quite clear; you reap what you sow. If you sow to the spirit righteousness you will reap eternal life but if you sow to the flesh (sin) you will reap eternal death. Paul wrote much about this. That's why the false doctrine of eternal security is so dangerous, my brother and sister, and has sent many to hell including pastors. I remember during one of my 4 month trips to Nigeria a pastor who was raised from the dead told me that he was taken to hell and immediately another pastor that he knew came running up to him and he was shocked. He asked this pastor why he was in hell and the pastor replied, "I stole money from the church but I'm ready to give it back now." But of course it was too late; once you die judgment is set by the Lord Jesus and he was immediately in hell. Those who serve the Lord, of course, are immediately present with the Lord.

But God the Father “sowed” (gave) His only begotten Son, the Word of God, to reap a family of the Word. The Bible says that Jesus is the “first fruit” of many brethren so even though it hurt the Father tremendously to see the way His Son was treated upon the earth, He “so loved” us and wanted us to rejoin His family that He “gave” and Jesus “gave”—He was the true Shepherd who laid down His “life for the sheep.”

Love—“God so loved (italics added for emphasis) ... that He gave ...” If you study the Scriptures and allow the Holy Spirit to conform you to the image of Christ Jesus you will learn much about love. The Royal Law is to “love God” and “love our neighbor.” And as most of you know, there are 4 Greek words for love but this type love (Gk. Agape) is the highest because it is unconditional love. I have two adorable children still at home aged 8 and 14 and I love them more than words can say and always will. That is unconditional love. But God loves everybody, even those in hell. Jesus gives us a glimpse of the Father’s love in his Sermon on the Mount, especially Matthew 5:44-48 where we are taught to “love your enemies” if we want “to be perfect” as the Father is perfect.

Forgiveness—probably one of the greatest sins is unforgiveness. Yet the Scriptures teach, especially the gospel of John and 1 John both written by the Apostle of Love, John, that if you are unwilling to forgive your brothers you will not inherit eternal life. Jesus told Peter when queried about this that he was obligated to forgive 70X7 times in one day, meaning that unforgiveness is something we are obligated to do as many times as people ask for forgiveness. God does this in our case; He told me so many years ago when I talked to Him about this He said, “Do you think I would ask you to do something I’m not willing to do for you?” So, we always tell people: whenever there’s any sin in your life, be quick to repent even if it’s the 999th time. Jesus will forgive you. Ask for His forgiveness and ask the Holy Spirit to help you.

Lovingkindness (Heb. Hessed)—as I wrote in Chapter 3 of The High Calling of God, hessed, translated mercy in the King James and lovingkindness in more literal translations is a covenant term. You need to understand this; most Christians have never studied covenant and that’s a shame because if you understand covenant you better understand both the nature of God and the structure of the Holy Bible. Everything God does is by covenant—every, single major idea in the Scriptures is based on covenant. A covenant is like a legal agreement between the parties (God and man)—it contains 3 parts: conditions, promises, and guarantees.

The most frequently used word to describe Yahweh in the Old Testament is hessed. Its basic meaning is faithfulness in covenant keeping and also always acting in such a way that the other party in the covenant benefited. We can see this principle also throughout the New Testament in such scriptures as Romans 8:28. “While on the earth, Jesus clarified hessed in the meaning of four words—love, submission, service and rulership. They were all aimed at taking care of the best interests of the other person ... Christ Jesus was the standard for everything in the covenant; hessed is Christlikeness.” (p. 61, The High Calling of God). The most wonderful part about hessed is that God didn't just restore man to his previous

state. No, He created a whole new race like Jesus, praise God. Jesus was the First among many brothers and sisters, hallelujah!

The Fruit of the Spirit—this is the last of the 10 Kingdom principles that I am going to cover in this blog; I may write an article on all of them later in more detail if the Lord desires. As my wife has preached for many years, the Fruit of the Spirit is the very nature and character of Jesus and the Father. You should meditate on them every single day and give yourself a spiritual checkup at least once a year, maybe New Year's Day, and rate yourself each year from 1 to 10 on each of the 9 Fruits. This will give you an annual synopsis of how you are doing in helping the Holy Spirit conform you to the image of Jesus.

Tomorrow will be Christmas Day. What a wonderful day! Yes, the world has commercialized Christmas more than any other holiday. But that shouldn't distract those of us who know the Truth and the Truth was born in a manger on Christmas Day to bring hesed, agape, forgiveness, and all of the other key Kingdom principles into the world for us to understand The Power of Relationship and God's great love for all people! So when you give those gifts to your loved ones and friends this Christmas Day in the spirit of love and kindness, don't forget to forgive those who have hurt you this past year as well. Learn the lesson of Christmas as demonstrated by God the Father and God the Son. And work on deepening that relationship next year so that the Kingdom of God is advanced upon the earth. Please take time to watch the video below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Z-ZfA1rgJs>

All of us at Christ Church International wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year in the Lord.

Maranatha!