

ARE WE LOSING CHRISTMAS?

Matthew 1:18-23

Introduction: Do you think that the Christmas of today is like Christmas started out? Is the Christmas of today even like the Christmas of your childhood?

- We sing Christmas hymns, talk about and pray for world wide peace and goodwill.
- We promote kindness, brotherhood, charity, happiness with each other.
- We make every effort to be home with our families at Christmas.
- We give gifts to one another and send Christmas cards to everyone we know.
- We have special Christmas church services and they are one of the two services of the year that are most highly attended.
- Don't all these things capture the meaning of Christmas? What-where are we missing out on the real meaning of Christmas?

What about Christmas television shows? What about Christmas music? What about Christmas displays? Most of what is seen on television and songs and displays of today have little to do with the real meaning of Christmas.

Christmas is really about the birth of Jesus, Immanuel, God with us, the Promised Messiah who came to save His people and the Gentiles from their sins. *Matthew 1:18-23*

I. SATAN, THROUGH THE WORLD, HAS CHANGED CHRISTMAS

- He has reduced the real Christmas to little more than an elaborate fable, a legend, so much that most people don't know which is real and which has been made up, for instance:
 - The wise men were kings, there were three of them, they rode on camels, and their names were Casper, Balthasar and Melchior and their three skulls have been discovered and are on display somewhere.
 - There were all kinds of animals around the stable where the baby lay.
 - There was snow, singing angels, a countless number of worshippers and even a little drummer boy. (And countless more imaginative additions)

II. THE CHRISTMAS SPIRITUAL VALUES HAVE CHANGED

- Christmas is just plain old consumerism, commercialism, not to mention all the "traditions" from other countries being added to the meaning of Christmas, such as:
 - Santa Clause, flying reindeer, elves, Frosty the snowman, Mistletoe, Christmas trees, houses and yards covered in lights and decorations.
 - All the songs about the Christmas season without any mention of the real reason for Christmas.
 - All the parties, spending, eating, rush and hurry.
 - Been to the mall at Christmas? Ever notice what is advertised? Listen to what the shoppers are talking about? Take a good look at the Christmas cards?
 - Think about this: If you were someone who had never heard of the Lord Jesus Christ or Christmas. What message would you get from what you see and hear at Christmas?

III. WONDER WHAT OUR LORD THINKS ABOUT ALL THIS?

- Is this a birthday celebration of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was born in a stable and slept in a feeding trough?
- The story has been told for many years about a wealthy family who had a birthday party for their new baby. They invited all their relatives and friends to their fine home for the party. An hour or so into the party the mother of the baby went upstairs to bring the baby down for everyone to meet but made a tragic discovery. The large bed upon which she had placed the sleeping baby was piled high with coats, hats and scarf of the many guests and the baby had suffocated underneath the mound of carelessly tossed clothing.
- This is what the world has done to Christmas - covered up and smothered the real reason for Christmas with other interests.

IV. CHRISTMAS SHOULD BE A TIME OF SPIRITUAL JOY AND HAPPINESS

- The true joy of Christmas comes from realizing what Christmas is really all about, and knowing that very ONE whose birthday it is.
- You can't know Him if you don't understand that He is real.
 - His birth is real.
 - Mary and Joseph were real people.
 - Their dilemma of not being able to find a room was surely as frightening to them as it would be for you or me.
 - The stable (manger) in which Mary had the baby smelled of animal smells, dusty, dirty, as did the first visitors, the shepherds.
- That first Christmas was anything but what we envision today from what is being told.
- What makes it so much all the more wonderous is that the baby lying in the manger is **GOD**.
- **God was in that first Christmas, where is He now?**

CONCLUSION:

1. The heart and soul of the Christmas message is God came to live among us!
2. There were not many worshipers around the little manger, only a handful of shepherds, but one day, every knee will bow before Him and every tongue will confess that He is Lord.
3. Those of that day, today, and all the days in between then and the end of time who ignore Him or never knew Him, all will one day bow, too, even if it is to be judged.
4. How much better to honor Him now with the worship He deserves.
5. This is what Christmas is really all about! Have you lost the real meaning of Christmas?