



# GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

## CHRISTMAS IS A BIG DEAL

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December 11, 2022

Christmas is a big deal worldwide, but not necessarily for the reasons you may think. Nearly half of the world's population celebrates Christmas. That equates to over 2.3 billion people. Here in America, 90% of the population celebrates Christmas, while in Europe it is around 75%. Christmas has been celebrated for over 1600 years. In much of the world, and definitely here in America, life comes to a halt to celebrate Christmas.

But why? Why has this holiday been celebrated by so many for so long? Is it because of presents, Santa Claus, reindeer, Christmas trees, lights, and decorations? Is it because of the importance of family? Actually none of these are the reason that Christmas has been celebrated for so long. The real reason it has lasted and why it began was because of what was originally the center and reason for the celebration: The birth of Jesus Christ.

In modern times the recognition of the birth of Jesus tends to get lost in all the other "stuff" that has become synonymous with Christmas. But you can't get past the fact that a regular celebration of Christmas was to remember the birth of Jesus. It is true that many pagan holiday rituals have been adopted and there is dispute as to whether Jesus was actually born on December 25th. Yet it remains that the lasting endurance of this holiday is in what it celebrates: the birth of Jesus Christ. To use a now trite statement: "Jesus is the reason for the season."

Many people are frustrated at the “commercialization” of Christmas. There are many who are bothered that the birth of Jesus has been blurred by the gift giving, the decorating, Santa Clause, and the other popular items of the season. Even with all of the extras that have become part of the holiday, it is intriguing that it has been celebrated regularly for all of these years. Perhaps there is more to Christmas than the masses realize.

If we focus on the center of the celebration, or what should be—the birth of Jesus Christ—we will find that this event, and the context of the event, has all that is needed to cause humans to make a big deal out of it. You see, mankind was lost in sin. That sin entered at the beginning of human history when the world's first two people, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God. With that original sin came a curse on all mankind.

Although that curse was a judgment by God on the sinfulness of mankind, God immediately instituted a plan by which man could be redeemed—rescued from the judgment of sin. That plan would come through the birth of Jesus, His life, His death, His resurrection, and His second coming. You can say that Jesus Christ is the central element of God's master plan of redemption for mankind. That redemption could only become reality if Jesus Christ came to this earth as a baby and eventually died on a cross and then was raised from the dead. These elements are why Christmas continues to be celebrated today by people all around the world.

It is possible and even likely for some of us to think that the birth of Jesus doesn't have enough impact to energize a continual yearly celebration. Instead, we are tempted to think that it is because of the gifts, decorations, and Christmas carols. I believe that if we were to expose ourselves to the truths about Jesus' coming to this earth we would realize that it is a big deal. In fact, if we continue to meditate on it and consider it we will find it is the most important thing that has ever happened in the history of the world.

I would like to challenge you to immerse yourself in the truth about Jesus' birth, life, ministry, and purpose this Christmas season. In Further Reflection you will find various Bible passages dealing with these things. You will also find the titles of many of our popular Christmas carols. Take the time to look at all of the verses of these carols. You will find that they speak of the reality of Jesus' birth, life, and ministry. They reflect on the significance of the events to humankind.

If you truly take a deeper look into these passages and carols you will find yourself in awe of what God did on that night so long ago. You will realize how blessed you are to walk in the light of God's master plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. I encourage you to make reading and reflection on these things part of your celebration of the season this year.

## FURTHER REFLECTION

- **His Birth and Early Life:**  
Matthew 1:18 - 2:23  
Luke 1:5- 2:40
- **Prophecies of His Coming:** Isaiah 7:14  
Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 72
- **Christmas Carols to Consider:** Oh Holy Night, Joy to the World, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, O Come O Come Emmanuel, Silent Night, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, The First Noel