

“GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY”

LUKE 2:10

INTRODUCTION:

1. They say it is the most wonderful time of the year. However, does the Christmas have anything to do with the birth of Christ?
2. Christmas is derived from the Old English rendering Christes Maesse or the Mass of Christ, which is a Catholic liturgy.
3. Questions surround the origin and celebration of Christmas.

I. THE REAL REASON FOR THE SEASON

- A. The Christmas celebration has its roots in the second century with the pagan observance of Saturnalia.
 1. Celebrated December 17-25, Saturnalia was a harvest festival worshipping the sun god Saturn.
 2. During the feast celebrations included the reversal of social roles, criminal behavior, and the worship of trees.
- B. Christmas was established in the fourth century as the Catholic church reinvented the feast with a Christian spin.

II. CHRISTMAS AND THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

- A. There is no doubt that the birth of Christ is significant.
 1. It was prophesied centuries before. (Isa. 7.14; Mic. 5.2-5)
 2. It was promised by angels. (Matt. 1.18-23; Luke 1.26-35)
 3. It was proclaimed throughout the world. (Luke 2.8-14)
- B. However, there is no reference in the New Testament regarding the observance of His birth. (Luke 2.1-5)
- C. Where is the emphasis? On His death! (1 Cor. 11.23-26)

III. CAN CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?

- A. The question is often asked, “Can Christians celebrate Christmas as long as it is not recognized as His birth?”
 1. Paul warned of the practice of feast days and observance of “*days, months, seasons, and years*” (Gal. 4.8-11)
 2. Eating meat sacrificed to idols was justified with the understanding that idols are nothing. (1 Cor. 8.4-8)
- B. When is celebrating Christmas sinful?
 1. When tradition is exalted over command. (Matt. 15.8,9)
 2. When conscience is weakened. (1 Cor. 8.9-11)
 3. When celebrating as a religious holiday. (1 Cor. 4.6)

CONCLUSION: Worshipping God is a year round event.

NORTHSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

2424 McCarran St. ♦ North Las Vegas, NV ♦ 89030
Phone: (702) 642-3141 Email: Pruitt@nlvchurchofchrist.com
www.nlvchurchofchrist.com

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS :	9:00AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP:	9:50AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP:	6:00PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS	7:30PM

*Worshipping
God “in Spirit
and truth”
(John 4.23)*

DECEMBER 20TH, 2009

LIFE BEFORE BIRTH

Hope springs eternal for the faithful Christian knowing that “*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*” (John 3.16). Through His sacrifice those who submit to the conditions of the gospel and live faithfully to God are promised life after death (2 Tim. 4.7,8). But what does the Bible say regarding life before birth?

Looking into the birth of Christ brings out a striking detail that pro-choice advocates are sure to dismiss. In the first chapter of Luke, we find Mary coming to the house of her cousin Elizabeth (Luke 1.39,40). Mary had just learned that she was pregnant with Jesus, the Son of God (Luke 1.35). She wanted to announce the good news to Elizabeth who also learned that she was carrying in her womb John the Baptist (Luke 1.13). When Mary arrived, John leaped for joy in his mother’s womb (Luke 1.41-44).

What does this mean? It offers additional evidence that life does not begin at birth, but at conception. While still in the womb, John experienced joy. Furthermore, it is no accident that the inspired word of God does not refer to the unborn John as a fetus. Instead, the word of God describes Elizabeth as having “*conceived a son*” (Luke 1.36), and that the “*baby leaped in her womb*” (Luke 1.41), and “*the baby in my womb*” (Luke 1.44). Son? Baby? This doesn’t sound like a simple lifeless embryo or fetus that has no soul.

The word of God teaches that life in the womb is just that – life. Can we ever justify the taking of an innocent life? CLP

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH

HEBREWS 11:1

INTRODUCTION:

1. The basis of Christianity rests on three indisputable facts.
 - a) God is. This accounts for man's duty. (Heb. 11.6)
 - b) Satan is. This accounts for man's dilemma. (1 Pet. 5.8)
 - c) Jesus is. This accounts for man's deliverance. (1 Cor. 3.11)
2. Some may argue that these facts are not beyond doubt, yet Christians rest their faith on a solid foundation.

I. PROVE ALL THINGS

- A. **1 THESSALONIANS 5.21:** *"Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good"* The foundation of faith is provable!
- B. Too many build their faith upon a shaky foundation.
 1. Traditions,, emotions, scientific theories. (1 Cor. 2.5)
 2. Christians are to contend for the faith, but what happens when our faith is indefensible? (Jude 3; 1 Pet. 3.15)
 3. Without a solid foundation on which to base one's faith there will always be doubt. (James 1.6; Eph. 4.13,14)

II. HOW DO WE PROVE OUR FAITH?

- A. Peter unveils the proof needed for faith. (2 Pet. 1.16-21)
 1. It was not based on fables and rumors. (Verse 16)
 2. It was based on eye witness testimony. (Verses 17,18)
 3. It was based on Old Testament prophecy. (Verses 19-21)
- B. The proof of our faith is the word of God. (Rom. 10.17)
 1. The eye witnesses of those who saw the works of Christ (John 20.30; 1 Cor. 15.5-8; Acts 10.39-43)
 2. The prophecies of the Old Testament. (Rom. 15.4)
 3. How does the word of God lay the foundation? It is impossible for God to lie. (Rom. 4.18-21; Heb. 10.23)

III. HAVING A SOLID FOUNDATION GIVE CONFIDENCE

- A. Having established a proper foundation we can serve God without fear and hesitation. (1 Thes. 1.5; Heb. 10.22)
- B. With the full assurance of faith, Christians can...
 1. Have confidence in our hope. (Rom. 5.5; 2 Tim. 1.12)
 2. Have confidence to share the gospel. (Rom. 1.16)
 3. Have confidence to defend the truth. (2 Cor. 10.4,5)

CONCLUSION: The solid foundation of God stands!

TAKING THE TIME

It seems as though it is ever changing. Sometimes it drags on when we are anxiously awaiting for some future event. Other times it passes in a flash and we wonder where the time went. Yet time is a constant. The ticking of the clock does not speed up or slow down. The years do not linger when we are young and rush by when we are older. It is our perception that changes.

The Psalmist observed that man's lifespan extends to seventy years and if he is in good health it may extend to eighty (Ps. 90.10). If we were to take all the people who died in the last hundred years it would indeed average somewhere between seventy and eighty. However, the fact remains that no one knows how many years they will have on earth. Some lives may extend into triple digits while others may leave this earth at sixty, forty, or even while still a child.

All this emphasizes one simple point. We need to live our lives to the fullest. We ought always to take advantage of every opportunity to do good that comes our way *"redeeming the time"* (Eph. 5.16; Col. 4.5). Everyone of us is given the same twenty-four hours in a day, but not everyone uses those hours to their fullest potential. Some are productive squeezing every moment he can to accomplish some good, while others squander their lives accomplishing nothing. Methuselah was the oldest man to ever live leaving this earth at 969 years old (Gen. 5.27), yet the inspired text does not record a single good thing that he ever did.

But what can I do? There is never a time when one does not have something that he can do. No one should ever be at a loss of what to do, for opportunities are all around. The question lies not in the lack of opportunities, but in the lack of desire to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves, or the desire to do something else. Paul writes, *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all especially to those of the household of faith"* (Gal. 6.10). Even when there is no opportunity to do good to another there is always an opportunity to do good. Spend time with the family. Spend time in prayer. Spend time reading the Bible. Spend time in quiet meditation.

There is time. But that time will not always be available. Take the time to do good before your time is up. CLP