

## Let us all say "He is my Lord and my God"

The other day I turned on my car radio and heard, to my surprise, the Christmas polka. What has such a song and tune to do with Christmas? Christmas is good for business. If you have a poor Christmas, you have a poor year. It is the season to make money. Buy! Buy! buy! The sales are on! The secular take over of Christmas, which has never been as pronounced as today, is a real thorn in the church's flesh. Who still remember, in this post-Christian era, what Christmas is all about? Its message has been hollowed out.

Christmas, or Christ-feast, is a high and holy day on the calendar of the church. On the 25th of December the Christian church recalls what took place nearly two thousand years ago in Bethlehem - the birth of the Saviour of the world. Of course, we don't know the exact date of Christ's birth. We can't be sure why the 25th of December was chosen. You can't find a Bible text for it.

In 200 AD Clement of Alexandria recorded his opinion that Christ was born on November 17th. They argued about the correct date until 353 AD. (Life went at a much slower pace in those days), when the consensus was December 25th. It appears that Christmas was celebrated on that date for the first time in the city of Rome in 354, in Constantinople in 379 and in Antioch in 388.

Who is He Who came? The only source of information is the Scriptures. Christ was more than a man. His life was not limited to the years spent on earth. He existed before the world was created - "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." (John 1:1-3, Rome in 354, in Constantinople in 379 and in Antioch in 388. ) He came from heaven's glory to assume the frail body of a man.

Christmas commemorates and celebrates the most stupendous event ever recorded in all of human history. God sent His Son into this world in the grip of darkness, brokenness and sin. Christmas is the message of the incarnation - God becoming flesh. The Virgin Mary gave birth to the Son of God. This was in fulfillment of the ancient prophecy "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14) The angel Gabriel reiterated the same message when he said to the most blessed of all women: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35) Shepherds worshipped Him. Wise men acclaimed Him. John the Baptist recognized Him as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) Christ has come to be the light in the dark world. This Christ, born of the virgin Mary, crucified, buried, risen and ascended, confronts the world with His gospel. He has come to "preach the gospel to the poor ... to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18) This Lord demands faith from us. We will have a blessed Christmas when we can say of Christ - "He is my Lord and my God."

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