



His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by
Pastor Ryan Eckstein of Concordia
Lutheran Church in Jamestown,
ND. His Word is Truth will appear in
this paper every 3rd Monday.

In today's article I will discuss the true meaning of Christmas. However, first I want to inform the MEN of our community about a new MEN'S bible study I'm starting on Thursday, January 14th! We're going to study what the Bible says about "Faith in Christ." This class will meet every Thursday morning (starting 1/11/07) from 7AM to 8AM at the "Meeting Grounds" Coffee Shop on 613 10th St. SE. WE INVITE YOU MEN TO JOIN US!

Now for the subject of today's article: CHRISTMAS! What is the purpose of Christmas? Throughout history Christians who were faithful to God's Word have believed and celebrated the "Incarnation" – a word that means "in the flesh."

Scripture teaches that the eternal Son of God became human when He was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Luke 1:35 an angel says to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." (Also see Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-20; John 1:1-3 & 14; Galatians 4:4)

We must also understand that the Son of God did NOT stop being fully God when He became human! True Christians have always believed that Jesus is "Immanuel" – a Hebrew

word that means "God with us." Colossians 2:9 reads, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form..." (Also see John 8:58; Acts 9:20; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:1-13; Revelation 1:8 & 22:12-13)

But why is it so important for us to believe that Jesus is "God in human flesh?" Matthew 1:21 records the angel's words to Joseph, "[Mary] will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." The name "Jesus" is a Hebrew name that means "Yahweh saves." The Hebrew word "Yahweh" is the Holy Name of God who entered human flesh to save us from our greatest enemy: OUR OWN SIN AGAINST GOD! Only God Himself can save us from our sins against Him!

The Son of God took on human flesh so He could offer His body as a sacrifice

for our sins! 1st Peter 2:24 reads, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness, by his wounds you have been healed." Also, Colossians 1:22 reads, "But now [God] has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight." (Also see Hebrews 4:14-16 and 1st Peter 1:17-21)

Therefore, Christmas is NOT about us giving gifts to each other (although there's nothing wrong with this practice!). Christmas is NOT about "the power of human love." The fact is, human love is NOTHING apart from GOD'S LOVE for us in Jesus (see John 15:5)! 1st John 4:9-10 reads, "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us

and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

So, the TRUE meaning of Christmas is the celebration of the Incarnation – God's Son taking on human flesh that He might save us from our sins by dying on the cross in our place of damnation! With that understood, the TRUE meaning of Christmas is not limited to a few days in December. The TRUE meaning of Christmas is something we get to celebrate every day of the year as the Holy Spirit uses God's Word to convict us of sin and give us faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. God has given YOU the most precious gift that exists: HIS SON! When Jesus' love and mercy fills our hearts through faith we are then moved to love and serve others in Jesus' Name!

Jesus is the reason for the season! You can have peace, hope and joy this Christmas and ALL YEAR

LONG because God's Son was born to save you from your sins. Just like God led the Magi and the Shepherds to Jesus (see Matthew 2:1-12 and Luke 2:8-20), God now uses His Word to lead YOU to Jesus, your Lord and Savior, that you might receive forgiveness of all your sins and eternal life in God's love. HAVE A BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND A NEW YEAR IN JESUS!

Please read the next "His Word is Truth" on Monday, January 15th! Pastor Eckstein will begin a series of articles on "The Apostles' Creed."

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's webpage: www.concordia.org
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