

# CHRISTMAS IS NOT OUR BIRTHDAY

*Luke 2:9-14; John 3:16*

Christmas is a *birthday* party, but it's *not* for us.

## It's a Party

Each year it becomes increasingly difficult to shield ourselves from the meaningless rituals that come with Christmas. We love the music, decorations, lights, food, movies, sales, and, of course, the getting and giving of presents. As the song says, "It is the most wonderful time of the year." The anticipation of Christmas Day is a thrill, for sure, when we tear into all of those packages and see what we got! But, just as quickly as the boxes are emptied, and the bows, ribbon, and wrapping are all laid aside, the day is done. The excitement dissipates and reality returns. Christmas is over, and we move on.

When we consider all that we do to get ready for the big day, there are a lot of similarities to a birthday party -- decorations, food, music, guests, games, and, yes, gifts. We are, it seems, throwing a big party, but who's the party for? It's for us, of course! But wait, is Christmas really a celebration of our birthday? It sure seems that way. We get together, sing songs, eat fun food, give each other gifts, and then go on our merry way. Are we really that self-indulgent? Is this great day really all about us?

## Whose Birthday Is It?

Christmas is a birthday party, but it's not for us. We are celebrating the birth of Christ. It is His birthday, not ours. But why do millions of people around the world celebrate His birthday? Simply put, it's a big deal! The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are the most important events in the history of the world, but none of those things would've been possible without His birth in that lowly manger.

Before Jesus was born, the world was dark and destitute, hopelessly trapped in sin and selfishness. Men had no way to make themselves right with God; but, then, Jesus was born. God sent His Son to make a way of salvation for us, to redeem us from our sinful state and to restore us to a right relationship with Him.

In Jesus, then, is all of our hope for salvation and purpose in life. That is why we sing special songs about Him at Christmas time, because they capture these amazing truths. Listen to these words...

"Joy to the world -- the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King!" Here's another, "Hark! The herald angels sing, 'Glory to the newborn King! Peace on earth and mercy mild; God and sinners reconciled.'" Then, this one, "God rest ye merry gentlemen. Let nothing you dismay. Remember Christ, our Savior, was born on Christmas day, to save us all from Satan's power, when we were gone astray. O tidings of comfort and joy!"

We also sing, "Silent night, holy night, Son of God love's pure light. Radiant beams from Thy holy face with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus Lord at Thy birth..." And, finally, "O holy night, the stars are brightly shining. It is the night of the dear Savior's birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining, 'til He appeared and the soul felt its worth (of salvation). A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. Fall on your knees! O hear the angels' voices! O night divine, O night when Christ was born..."

## The Meaning of Gifts

The birthday of Jesus gives men hope! That's why the angel announced, "Behold, I bring you good news for all people, for today is born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!" Jesus is the greatest gift of all, a gift from God to save us from our sins and to give us new life, and to provide us genuine peace, joy, and hope for this life and the next. That is the real reason we should be excited for Christmas, the real reason to celebrate.

Is it wrong to give each other gifts? Of course not, but a year from now, will we remember what we got? Probably not. In the grand scheme of things, the gifts we give and get mean very little. But, those gifts should remind us of the greatest gift we've ever received. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Thank God for Christmas! It's His birthday that we celebrate, not ours; and life is more than just getting stuff in boxes, and Christmas is much more than just another day on the calendar. That baby in the manger is salvation, a gift from God that we can celebrate every day of the year.