

What Is The True Meaning Of “Christmas”?

A Radio Message by
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I greet you in the name of the One Who before Pontius Pilate “witnessed a good profession” (I Timothy 6:13)—Jesus Christ the Lord.

As you may remember, Pontius Pilate was no little troubled as to how he was going to handle this man who was reported to be “The Son of God” and “The King of the Jews.” In response to one of Pilate’s questions Christ replied, “To this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice” (John 18:37,38). In response to this clear and bold declaration Pilate only retorted with what was an obvious reflection of his frustration and dilemma. He exclaimed—

“WHAT IS TRUTH ?”

No doubt, the words of Pilate still echo down through the corridors of time to this very moment—for the world is still most certainly frustrated by this evasive subject.

Jesus Christ is the Christian’s example to witness truth in the face of overwhelming opposition and awful violence to the will of God and to the truth itself. While Jesus was here on earth he became the most UN-popular person ever to walk the face of the earth. Though many people came to hear Him they were soon drastically divided. The very first recorded occasion of Christ speaking publicly was in His own synagogue of Nazareth. We are told that the audience having heard His severe rebukes to the people because of their unbelief, and His final—“But I tell you the truth”—I say, that audience “was filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill...that they might cast Him down headlong” (Luke 4:16-30). On other occasions Christ was invited to depart certain cities.

During His ministry large crowds of people who professed interest in Him would hear Him say something they could not understand nor appreciate and, for which reason, they would cease from following Him. So Jesus Christ knew how painful it was to see people leave Him and not heed the truth He gave. This took place till the day of His death or execution when we are told “all men forsook Him” (Mark 14:50). So, as a minister of Jesus Christ, I will not at all be surprised by what most people will say when they hear this message today.

My subject is—“What is the True Meaning of Christmas?”

From The PALACE,
To The PRAETORIUM,
To The PAVEMENT
And finally,
To The PLACE OF A SKULL

When the Lord Jesus Christ at the close of His ministry on earth was finally taken by the mob and Jewish palace guards, He was first brought before the religious leaders of that day. He was taken, we are told, into “the Palace of the High Priest” (Matt. 26:3). Here He was mocked and beaten by order of the religious leaders. He was also questioned and false charges were placed against Him. On this occasion the false witnesses who were summoned could not agree among themselves in their testimony, and thus Christ was finally charged with blasphemy because He claimed to be The Son of God. This was the first group of men Christ faced during the time of His trial and sufferings.

Then he was taken before Pontius Pilate and to the Hall of Judgment where Pilate and later Herod made inquisition. In Mark 15:16 this hall was identified as “The Praetorium.” Bible dictionaries say that the Praetorium was sometimes used as the headquarters for a general or ruler who was occupying the land at a given time and, much like our City Halls of today, was commonly used as the planning chamber for the city or national ruling council. It was here in the Praetorium where Christ received further interrogations, brutal beatings and mockery.

Pilate then took Christ outside to the place called “The Pavement” (John 19:13). In the Hebrew it was called “Gabatha.” It was simply an open place on large flat stones where Christ could be viewed by the crowds. As a spectacle for public viewing He was adorned in a purple robe and crowned with thorns, as it were fitting for a king. He could either be pitied or hated and hounded by the crowd. The latter occurred.

From this place of public viewing, Christ was taken to the place that was almost literally the trash heap, at least for criminals. This was called “Golgotha” or “Calvary,” meaning “The Place of a Skull.” Apparently the geologic or rock features resembled a skull. There was also a graveyard just behind it. This was all just outside the city walls of Jerusalem.

These various places to which Christ was taken are very interesting in their sequence. First to the “Palace” before the religious element; then to the “Praetorium” which was the city counsel chamber or hall of judgment; then to the “Pavement” for public viewing; and finally to “The Place of a Skull.”

He was brutally beaten. He was tormented and mocked. He was spit upon and His beard was plucked. He was scourged, buffeted and laughed at. This was how the world showed their respect for the One—the One was Who was dying on the cross for their very sins. In Isaiah the 52nd and 53rd chapters, we are told He was treated so badly that, “His visage was so marred, more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men,”

Now you are probably asking why am I giving this gruesome yet factual story of the sufferings of Christ if I said I was going to talk about “The true meaning of Christmas” Maybe you will not believe the truth, but this precise scene WAS THE FIRST “CHRIST-MAS.” I truly hope and pray that you will listen very carefully as I give both Scriptural and secular proof as to the true meaning of “Christmas.”

THE MODERN “PRIEST’S PALACE”

Do you know the meaning of the word “CHRIST-MAS”?? Most people simply suppose it means the “birthday of Christ.” Of course that is what it is generally associated with—the celebration of Christ’s birth. However, the word “Christmas” is very important, and in reality it tells a shocking story. The word “Christmas” comes to us from the Latin—“Christe-Masse.” This in Roman Catholic liturgy simply means “The Mass of Christ.” And just what is “The Mass of Christ”? The answer is shocking to most Protestants who think they have repudiated the Roman Catholic religion. Historically the Roman Catholic Mass is abhorred by Protestants as the ultimate idolatry and blasphemy. This is because the Roman Catholic Mass is supposed to be the RE-SACRIFICE of Jesus Christ in an unbloody manner.

The “MASS” according to Roman Catholic religious tradition means “SACRIFICE.” In particular, it means “The Sacrifice of Christ.” Allow me to quote from a standard Roman Catholic Dictionary to prove and illustrate this fact:

“MASS...The SACRIFICE of the New Law in which Jesus Christ offers Himself to God in an unbloody manner under the appearance of bread and wine...THE MASS IS THE SAME SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS, because Jesus Christ is the INNOCENT VICTIM...The difference between the Sacrifice of the Cross is that the Sacrifice of the Mass is not a bloody Sacrifice...” (Emphasis mine.)

“A Practical Catholic Dictionary, by Jessie Corrigan Pegis; published by the All Saints Press, Copyright—1957; Nihil Obstat: John A. Goodwin, J.C.D., Censor Librorum; Imprimatur: Cardinal Francis Spellman, Archbishop of New York.”

Think of it, my friends! They said that the only difference between the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacrifice of the Cross is that the Mass is not bloody! Otherwise it is the very same thing! That means “Christ’s-Mass” is **Christ’s Sacrifice**.

From the very same Dictionary we are told that Rome has named what they call “The Feast Of Our Lord’s Birth”—“Christe-Masse” or simply—“Christmas.” They did this, they say, “in honor of Jesus Christ.” Since the “Mass” means “The Sacrifice of Christ,” then it follows that “Christ’s-Mass” actually is that very special “MASS” (Sacrifice of Christ)—to the Honor of Christ. After all, Rome always had special “Masses” for special people, and now they ordained a special one for Jesus Christ, Himself. Are you horrified??? Shocked??? Confused???

If this is not yet startling enough to you, perhaps I can illustrate it by the following example. What if I should enter into some large church meeting, or some busy

department store at this Christmas season and shout to all in a loud hearty “Santa Claus” voice—

“MERRY SACRIFICE OF CHRIST, EVERYBODY” !?!?

You would, no doubt, then be shocked! You would think that I was being sacrilegious, or else blasphemous, or else totally out of my mind! Yet that is **PRECISELY** what everybody is saying when they greet each other with a—“Merry Christ-mas.” No doubt, this is done in total ignorance by people today.

The fact that the supposed birthday of Christ has come to be called “The Sacrifice of Christ” (Christmas) is merely another indication of the ugly religious confusion that exists in the world today. After all, which of you would have a birthday celebration for your son or daughter and call it “*His or Her Sacrifice*”???. Is this not a repetition of the “witnesses” for the religious leaders who, at the trial of Christ, “contradicted one another”? Truly, the world today is “**DRUNK**” with the wine of Rome’s religious brew. We are specifically told in Revelation 17:2 that the kings of the earth and the peoples of the earth are made drunken on the wine of that religious institution. (The Roman Catholic expositors say that Revelation 17 is a reference to Pagan Rome. Of course, they forget that Revelation is a prophecy of the future Rome, not the past Rome.)

Ironically, however, the blasphemous use of that word “Christ-Mas” in supposed honor of Christ’s birth, is quite accurate indeed, because in fact, Christ is again being hideously mocked as He was on the day of His real Sacrifice some 1900 years ago.

THE MODERN “PRAETORIUM”

Allow me to give an illustration of the modern Praetorium.

For more than ten years in a row, a group of Christian businessmen were granted permission to appear before the Mayor and City council of a large midwest city for the purpose of requesting permission to place posters on the downtown city streets where all the Christmas decorations had been placed by the city. These posters were to show the Popish and Pagan origin of Christmas.

All encyclopedias have made it common knowledge (at least available knowledge if people want to see it) that the traditions and customs surrounding this celebration are of Popish and Pagan origin. In the Bible the early church never celebrated any such thing.

The reason these men wanted this opportunity was because every year the city merchant men had been officially allowed by the City Council to decorate the public properties for this religiously oriented holyday called “Christmas.” These sincere Christian business men wanted to have the same opportunity, at their own expense, to put up posters explaining the Pagan origin of Christmas, and to further give truth as to what really is honoring to Jesus Christ the Lord. Of course, permission to do so has been denied every year. On the last such occasion I was able to deliver to that City Council and Mayor the following thoughts (Dec. 22nd, 1969)—

BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL

“The position that you gentlemen have in determining the affairs of this city is a very sober responsibility. In time you will have to give an account of your management over this outstanding city. At least the voters will have a part in judging your work, and this is proper. Now, however, you have brought the name of the Lord Jesus Christ into the activities and affairs of this city, and most certainly you will have to give an account for that. This should be far more sobering to you, unless, of course, you are hypocrites and infidels, in which case your dealing with Jesus Christ is just a light matter to you. I hope this is not true. To us here who are Christians and have come to that place in our lives where we want to be very conscious of pleasing Him—to us it is a very sobering matter indeed as to what we do with Him and how we use the name of Christ. We honestly have desired to know from Jesus Christ Himself what is really honoring to Him.

“We are reminded, and we would in turn remind you, that the Scriptures tell us that we ‘all must stand before the judgment seat of Christ’ (Rom. 14:10). Also another passage says, ‘because He (God) has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man Whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath raised Him from the dead’ (Acts 17:31). These Scriptures, I am sure, bear out that ALL men will answer to God and Christ, as to what they have done with Him—Christ.

HOW TO HONOR CHRIST

“Jesus Christ the Lord, I can assure you, is the only one duly qualified to tell any human being just how to honor Him. Likewise, we should understand that he has spoken quite clearly on this subject. It is further quite clear from the Scriptures that Jesus Christ and His apostles have said absolutely nothing about celebrating some supposed birthday for Christ. For which reason I do not believe at all that Jesus Christ is flattered by the stupidity of the whole thing. Which of you here believe that God in heaven and Jesus Christ the Lord enjoy and are flattered by these gaudy decorations supposedly to His honor? I believe that you are more intelligent men than that. The days of idolatry are not over! I intend to bring to your attention that this ‘Christmas’ celebration is in fact the most horrible idolatry of these times. I fear for you. I fear for all those who indulge in this. I fear for you because of the flagrant hypocrisy of it all and because of the severe language the Scriptures use regarding religious hypocrisy.

“The words of Jesus Christ on the subject of just what is honoring to Him are the most remarkable words any man has ever uttered. They are words, of course, that qualify Him for the unique place and position that He holds in history. However, they are also words that brought the vehement wrath of men upon Him.

“Let me quote a few of His words that express His desire and concern for men—John 14:6, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the father but by Me.’ Matthew 11:28-30, ‘Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.’ John 5:40,41, ‘I receive not honor from men. Ye will not come to Me that you might have life.’ John 7:7, ‘But Me the world hateth, because I testify of it that the deeds thereof are

evil.’ Matthew 15:7-9, ‘You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you saying, this people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. But in vain, do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.’

A RE-SACRIFICING OF CHRIST

“In light of these few verses it is quite clear that Christ did not, nor does He now, receive honor from men nor from the world. Therefore as a Christian who reads the Word of God soberly, I believe that what is being done at this season of the year is actually a RE-SACRIFICING of Jesus Christ in mockery. Now allow me to continue to prove this conclusively from the Word of God and from facts.”

I then brought to the attention of the Council what I have stated earlier in this material—that the meaning of the word Christmas is actually “The Sacrifice of Christ,” and that we can conclude that the TRULY FIRST CHRIST-MASS was not a manger scene in the little town of Bethlehem, but rather the judgment hall and Golgotha some 33 & 1/2 years later. This was the original “Sacrifice of Christ,” and I say, what a “CHRIST-MASS” scene it was!!!

In going back to the events that took place in the Judgment Hall and on the Cross, an honest worldling, let alone a Spirit-led Christian, can see that on the occasion of the first Sacrifice of Christ there existed all the ingredients of the modern day Christmas.

THE SUBTLE REPETITION

Yes, there are startling facts to show that on both occasions there existed revelry and merry-making and celebration.

The occasion of Christ’s death was a religious holiday—the Passover. The vast crowds of people that gathered in Jerusalem at that time of the year have now been replaced by crowds of covetous, selfish people buying and preparing for themselves. They are still busy, cold, hard-hearted and pitiless as they scurry about to satisfy their desires without any affection for Christ whatsoever. They actually have no place for Him in their lives, and they will mercilessly ignore His plea and desire for their lives.

The first “Christ-Mass” was also an occasion for friendships to be made. We are told in Luke 23:12 that two notorious enemies, Herod and Pilate, were on that very day made fast friends. They apparently found common ground where they could both please the people at the same time by delivering up Christ to death. So it is today—the bitterest of enemies, Jew and Gentile, fraternize at the request of heartless multitudes of people to supply their greedy wishes. And, Oh, how profitable!

On the occasion of the yearly Passover it was the custom of the Romans to release a prisoner. Barabbas was a well-known criminal. He was a robber who turned insurrectionist and had committed murder in the insurrection. At this time his freedom was requested instead of Christ’s. He was released at the expense of an innocent victim. Today men and women with vile mouths and in drunken parties will take this opportunity to release their pent-up passions and lusts—all, of course, at the expense of Christ.

THE MODERN “PAVEMENT”

I can hear some of you people sternly objecting to all that I am giving. You say, “Times have changed! Today we are making public decorations in honor of Christ and not at all like they were doing back then!” But to you I say, are you so foolish that you so quickly forget what we were told in the Gospels of old? That they were HONORING Christ in their MOCKERY? Yes! we are specifically told how they tormented Him by “Worshiping” and honoring Him in obvious mockery. Listen—

“And they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they platted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon Him, and took the reed and smote Him on the head. And after they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from Him, and put His own raiment on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him” (Matthew 27:28-31).

Do you honestly believe that all the show today can be anything other than vulgarity and mockery? The gaudy decorations today have only replaced the purple robe! The modern sharp-pointed Holly Wreath has only replaced the charming and artistically placed Crown of Thorns.

THE MODERN “PLACE OF A SKULL”

On the “Place of a Skull” He thirsted! And Wine! Oh! Yes! We should not leave out the wine. This is the true “Spirit of Christmas”—from a bottle! But for Christ—only the vinegar (sour wine) in a sponge attached to a pole to touch His bleeding lips. All those today who are trying, as they say, “To put Christ back in Christmas,” are only doing as they did of old—trying to deaden the pain that comes from the world’s awful heartlessness towards Him. And Christ rejects it today even as He did then. Thank God! Christ is no longer in the “MASS” and He is no longer being put anywhere.

Ho! Ha! Ha!—Ho! Ho! Ho!
Their laughs echo today!

“Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” they shouted, “Sacrifice Christ!”—“Merry Sacrifice of Christ, everybody!” “Merry Christ-Mass!” “Merry Christmas!”

But listen, Oh! Unsaved soul, to the cry of that “Innocent Victim” still, “FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.”

As a pitiful spectacle on the Roman cross Christ but reflected the horrible destitute condition of the human race. The gruesome cross where Christ was “Massed” (Sacrificed) has now been ornamented by the “Angel of Light”—Satan (see II Cor. 11:14). Today these “Sacrifice of Christ” Trees stand as a token of modern idolatry and of man’s persistent hatred of the truth.

GOD OVERRULES

Perhaps more amazing than the foregoing facts is the truth that God has overruled the Satanically inspired effort to crush the Son of God, because God turned it for good in that He placed upon Christ all our sins, and Christ was judged, the Just for the unjust. He died for our sins. Marvel of marvels! is God's graciousness toward us. Not only did Christ die for us, but He also triumphantly arose from the dead to justify undeserving man. Now, turn from your idolatry and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!

CAN YOU HEAR THE ROOSTER CROW TODAY?

Today how many of you are like cowardly Peter and the rest of old who, fearing to stand for truth with Christ, ran and hid themselves or stilled their lips from testifying on His behalf? How many of you cowardly preachers today hear the rooster crow in your guilty consciences, as you shut your mouths about the truth concerning "Christmas" lest you be persecuted for Christ's sake?

Thank God, after those early brethren were filled by the Holy Spirit of God, they boldly told the world THE TRUTH. And they were more than willing to suffer for Jesus Christ. Are you willing today, if you are a Christian, to tell the same ruthless world—THE TRUTH?