

The Savior's Birth to a World Uninterested, Luke 2:1-20 - Sunday, December 25th, 2011

- I'll begin by saying to you the best church in the entire world; I hope you have the most blessed Christmas, and the best New Year ever.
- It probably goes without saying, we all know the reason for the season, and we're in good company with the likes of the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. NIV

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. NKJV

- For those of us who went to Israel back in 2008 and 2010, Christmas has taken on a whole new meaning having seen the Holy Land.
- I'm certain none of us will soon forget what we saw while standing in the shepherds fields overlooking a little town called; "Bethlehem."
- It is to this location that Luke's gospel takes us in recording the events that took place on this one silent, and amazing holy night.

Luke 2:1-20 1 And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.² This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.³ So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.⁷ And she **brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.** 8 Now there were in the same country **shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.** 9 And behold, **an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them,** and they were greatly afraid.¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, **I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.**"¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.¹² And this will be the sign to you: **You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.**"¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth **peace, goodwill toward men!**"¹⁵ So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."¹⁶ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.¹⁷ Now when they had seen Him, **they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.**¹⁸ And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. (NKJV)

- After almost two thousand years since the Savior's birth, sadly, though not surprisingly, the world is even more uninterested in Jesus.
- When you fast forward to the year 2011, you quickly realize celebrating the Babe lying in a manger is neither a silent nor a holy night.

World Net Daily, on Thursday, December 22nd posted an article titled; "The ultimate guide to attacks from anti-Christmas Grinches" - You won't believe how deep the hatred for this holiday runs - ...'Silent Night' [is] under attack ...Unnamed lawyers sent an anonymous request ... asking that [a] school remove "Silent Night" from its annual Christmas program because of its reference to Jesus. According to WAFF-TV, parents said they heard about a possible ban on the Christmas carol from their children's teachers. ...Christmas carolers are thrown out of a U.S. Post Office. The U.S. military apologizes for promoting a Christian-based charity and relief program providing holiday gifts to poor children. Across the country, Christmas lights, Christmas trees and menorahs are banned in public areas. Atheists and "free-thinkers" sue cities into submission, forcing removal of all things "Christ" on public property during the Christian holiday. Is the nation that puts "In God We Trust" on its currency at war with Christmas? ... In upstate New York, the Batavia City School District has declared that "Christmas and Hanukkah will no longer be celebrated in classrooms." According to WROC-TV, the district refused to allow holiday to be displayed in classrooms and teachers are discouraged from writing or saying "Merry Christmas." ... In November this year, the Air Force Academy apologized for an email promoting Operation Christmas Child – a Christian-based charity and relief program providing more than 8 million holiday gifts to impoverished children in 100 countries around the world – after it was accused of religious intolerance. According to Fox News radio, the Military Religious Freedom Foundation said military commanders went too far when they supported the gift program, sponsored by Samaritan's Purse, a group run by Franklin Graham. "This is a proselytizing entity of Franklin Graham," said Military Religious Freedom Foundation President Mikey Weinstein. According to the report, Weinstein filed a grievance on behalf of 132 Academy personnel, including two sets of Muslim-American parents.

<http://www.wnd.com/?pageId=380317>

- At the risk of depressing you on this Christmas morn, I would like to share with you some very troubling statistics concerning Christmas.

One source out of the UK, reported in the Daily Mail on 11th December 2010, with the title; "No room for Christ on Christmas cards?" Consider the following; "A survey by the Daily Mail of 5,363 cards in major supermarkets found only 45 with pictures of the Bible story. Traditional nativity scenes appear on less than 1% of all cards available. Don Horrocks of the Evangelical Alliance was interviewed by the Daily Mail for the article and said supermarkets were "airbrushing Christ out of Christmas"

<http://eauk.co/vShysi>

The same source had another statistic titled; "The dwindling religious significance of Christmas?" Here's what they found; "A survey commissioned by The Children's Society in 2010 found that only 10% of adults think that it's religious meaning is the most important thing about Christmas. Only 4% of 25-34 year olds thought the religious aspect was important whilst 20% of those over 60's years feel that it is the key aspect of Christmas. 67% of all adults said spending time with family was the most important thing about Christmas.

Source: Church of England Newspaper December 3rd 2010

Compiled by the Evangelical Alliance Information and Research Office November 2011

<http://www.eauk.org/resources/info/statistics/christmas-quotes-surveys-and-statistics.cfm>

Another report from a different source titled; "Surprising Christmas Statistics" had this to say; "Do you know where your Christmas tree came from? What are the chances that you'll have a heart attack over the holidays? ... let's take a look at some surprising Christmas statistics.

- Heart-related deaths jump by close to 5% during the holidays, according to a study by researchers at the University of California, San Diego and Tufts University.
- We all know that a lot of gifts get returned or re-gifted, but a lot of gifts also get re-sold. 66% of Brits auction their Christmas gifts on sites like Ebay.
- China might be the new North Pole. According to the National Christmas Tree Association, 85% of artificial trees come from China. According to the US Census Bureau, \$488.5 million worth of Christmas tree ornaments were imported from China between January and August 2010.

<http://www.chicagonow.com/chicago-hearts-trivia/2010/12/surprising-christmas-statistics/>

- Perhaps you'll agree that Christmas has become just as artificial as these trees from China, and so too have the ornaments of our lives.
- It seems that this Christmas artificiality has come at the expense of the Christmas reality, that God became one of us, so as to save us.
- Furthermore, what's come packaged with this is the sense that we as born again Christians, have overstayed our welcome in this world.

Luke 12:51-53 NIV (51) Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. (52) From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. (53) They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

- In other words, our proclamation of peace on earth and goodwill towards men will now invite a fight with those who are the closest to us.
- Why? Because Jesus warned us how that speaking the truth about both His first and second coming would be the source of division.
- Perhaps this may explain, not excuse, their mocking of us, and divisiveness towards us, when we attempt to keep Christ in Christmas.

- I get a kick out of the abbreviation; "Xmas." Try as they may, but they still can't X Christ out of Christmas, as "X" is Greek for "Christ."
- I'm at the place, as a Christian, where I can say to a Christ rejecting world, have your Xmas' or whatever, but after we are all raptured.
- Until then, your politically correct, gender-neutral celebration of the winter solstice and happy holidays, are simply going to have to wait!

I like how one commentator said it speaking of the outspoken atheist Richard Dawkins when he writes; "Dawkins can issue a secular intifada against Christianity all he likes, but we got the best holiday, the best music, and the best message – joy to the world and peace on earth. So Christmas ain't going away [just yet]..."

- I'll close this Christmas message this way; let's not be bashful let's be bold, not arrogant, militant but confident in celebrating our Savior.
- I began by wishing you the most blessed Christmas and best New Year ever because it may be our last Christmas and New Year here.
- That's if you're born again and have a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. If not, know you can have that today.