"KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS"

(How to Have Christ In Your Life)

John 1:10-13

12-24-2019

INTRODUCTION:

Though the world will again lose sight of the Christ of Christmas - ***You need to <u>keep Christ in your Christmas</u>!**

How? It all starts by having Him in your life.

How do you know whether or not you have Christ?

I. HAVE YOU <u>REJECTED</u> HIM? (v. 10-11)

A. Someone rejects Christ by being <u>willfully ignorant</u> of Him (v. 10)

B. Someone rejects Christ by not <u>personally receiving</u> Him (v. 11)

II. HAVE YOU <u>RECEIVED</u> HIM? (v. 12-13)

A. God's <u>wide offer</u> of salvation - "as many as"

B. God's <u>only source</u> of salvation - "received <u>Him</u>"

C. God's <u>specific limits</u> of salvation - "to <u>them</u>"

D. God's <u>eternal blessing</u> of salvation - "Gave He power to become the <u>Sons of God</u>"

E. God's <u>comforting assurance</u> of salvation - "Even to <u>them that believe</u> on His name"

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INTRODUCTION:

On December 25, much of the world will celebrate the birth of Someone they don't know, don't believe in, and don't want in their lives.

It amazes me how the world methodically and consistently keeps Christ out of Christmas.

Satan has successfully tricked the world into accepting substitutes for Christ and His salvation.

The world honors a substitute Christ -
Santa Claus

The world engages in substitute gift-giving -
Each other rather than Christ (Mt. 2:11)

The world imposes a substitute emphasis -
A mere Babe in a manger, rather than the God who became flesh

The world proclaims a substitute message -

A time of hilarity, socializing, alcohol and exquisite food, wishing each other "Happy Holidays" rather than a time to remember what Jesus came to accomplish (I Tim. 1:15)

"Christmas" is summed up in the phrase: "He was in the world"

"He" - Christ's presence was personal

"Was" - Christ's presence was factual

"In the world" - Christ's presence was visible.

Though the world will again lose sight of the Christ of Christmas - ***You need to keep Christ in your Christmas!**

How? It all starts by having Him in your life.

How do you know whether or not you have Christ?

I. HAVE YOU REJECTED HIM? (v. 10-11)

A. Someone rejects Christ by being willfully ignorant of Him (v. 10)

"Willful ignorance" is proven by the fact that Christ came into the world; He was actually here.

(He was seen, touched, heard, and his words were recorded for all to hear - John 1:1-2 - "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."

B. Someone rejects Christ by not personally receiving Him (v. 11)

Jesus came unto His own nation, and his own people received Him not - Cp. parable of the king and the wedding for His Son (Mt. 22:1-14)

II. HAVE YOU RECEIVED HIM? (v. 12-13)

"Received" = to take to yourself, to accept, to welcome into your life.

--Revel. 3:20

A. God's wide offer of salvation - "as many as"

"As many as" = All who; everyone.

No matter how great the number, everyone who received Christ is saved! God has enough saving power for all who would come

I Jn. 2:2 - "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for hte sins of the whole world."

I Tim. 2:4-6 - "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

John 3:16, Rom. 10:13, Rev. 22:17 - "Whosoever"

There are no restrictions (regardless of age, color, nationality, language)

You can come to Christ and He will not reject you (Jn. 6:37).

B. God's only source of salvation - "received Him"

"Received Him" - Him refers to the "He" (v. 11, 12) = Christ

Salvation is only in Christ Jesus!

--Acts 4:12 - "Neither is there salvation in any other"

--Mt. 1:21 - "He shall save His people"

--Acts 10:43 - To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins."

Someone could receive every religion, every wafer at every Catholic mass, every award by man, ever Guru, yet only ONE you must receive!

- The Door to eternal life is singular (Jn. 10:7, 9)
- The water of eternal life is only from one well (Jn. 4:14)
- The bread of eternal life is only one Person (Jn. 6:35)
- The way to eternal life is only in Jesus (Jn. 14:6)
- The resurrection for eternal life is exclusively Jesus (Jn. 11:25)

C. God's specific limits of salvation - "to them"

"To them" - Salvation is limited to those who receive Christ.

Though it is offered to all, it is not received by all, because not all will come to Jesus for it.

D. God's eternal blessing of salvation - "Gave He power to become the Sons of God"

"Sons of God" - an adopted child of God (Eph. 1:5; Ro. 8:14; Gal. 4:5)

Jn. 3:3 - "Unless a man is born again..."

SEE Jn. 1:13 - Being a son of God does not come by:

1) Physical birth ("blood")
2) Personal labor ("flesh")
3) Parental decision ("will of a husband")

But by the grace of God!

E. God's comforting assurance of salvation - "Even to them that believe on His name"

One might ask: How do I know whether or not I have received Christ?

Answer: Are you believing (present tense) on ("epi" - upon) His (Christ's) name (all who Jesus is)?

"Believe" and "on" - Not intellectual assent but personal dependance, reliance

"Seeing is not believing" as some claim - According to John 1:12 - "Receiving is believing!"

CONCLUSION:

WHY JESUS IS BETTER THAN SANTA CLAUS

Santa lives at the North Pole ...
JESUS is everywhere.

Santa rides in a sleigh ...
JESUS rides on the wind and walks on the water.

Santa comes but once a year ...
JESUS is an ever present help.

Santa fills your stockings with goodies ...
JESUS supplies all your needs.

Santa comes down your chimney uninvited ...
JESUS stands at your door and knocks, and then enters your heart.

You have to wait in line to see Santa ...
JESUS is as close as the mention of His name.

Santa lets you sit on his lap ...
JESUS lets you rest in His arms.

Santa doesn't know your name, all he can say is "Hi little boy or girl, what's your name?" ...
JESUS knew our name before we did.
Not only does He know our name,
He knows our address too.
He knows our history and future and
He even knows how many hairs are on our heads.

Santa has a belly like a bowl full of jelly ...
JESUS has a heart full of love.

All Santa can offer is HO HO HO ...
JESUS offers health, help and hope.

Santa says "You better not cry" ...
JESUS says "Cast all your cares on me for I care for you."

Santa's little helpers make toys ...
JESUS makes new life, mends wounded hearts,
repairs broken homes and builds mansions.

Santa may make you chuckle but ...
JESUS gives you joy that is your strength.

While Santa puts gifts under your tree ...
JESUS became our gift and died on the tree.

It's obvious there is really no comparison. We need to remember WHO Christmas is all about. We need to put Christ back in Christmas, Jesus is still the reason for the season. Yes, Jesus is better, he is even better than Santa Claus.

Merry CHRISTmas!!!

THE ART COLLECTOR'S SON

Author Unknown

Years ago, there was a very wealthy man who, with his devoted young son, shared a passion for art collecting. Together they traveled around the world, adding only the finest art treasures to their collection. Priceless works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet and many others adorned the walls of the family estate.

The widowed, elder man looked on with satisfaction, as his only child became an experienced art collector. The son's trained eye and sharp business mind caused his father to beam with pride as they dealt with art collectors around the world.

As winter approached, war engulfed the nation, and the young man left to serve his country. After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram. His beloved son was missing in action. The art collector anxiously awaited more news, fearing he would never see his son again. Within days, his fears were confirmed. The young man had died while rushing a fellow soldier to a medic.

Distraught and lonely, the old man faced the upcoming Christmas holidays with anguish and sadness. The joy of the season, a season that he and his son had so looked forward to, would visit his house no longer.

On Christmas morning, a knock on the door awakened the depressed old man. As he walked to the door, the masterpieces of art on the walls only reminded him that his son was not coming home. As he opened the door, a soldier greeted him with a large package in his hand. He introduced himself to the man by saying, "I was a friend of your son. I was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something to show you."

As the two began to talk, the soldier told of how the man's son had told every one of his, not to mention his father's, love of fine art. "I'm an artist," said the soldier, "and I want to give you this."

As the old man opened the package, the paper gave way to reveal a portrait of the man's son. Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting featured the young man's face in striking detail. Overcome with emotion, the man thanked the solider, promising to hang the picture above the fireplace.

A few hours later, after the soldier had departed, the old man set about his task. True to his word, the painting went above the fireplace, pushing aside thousands of dollars of paintings. And then the man sat in his chair and spent Christmas gazing at the gift he had been given.

During the days and weeks that followed, the man realized that even though his son was no longer with him, the boy's life would live on because of those he had touched. He would soon learn that his son had rescued dozens of wounded soldiers before a bullet stilled his caring heart.

As the stories of his son's gallantry continued to reach him, fatherly pride and satisfaction began to ease the grief. The painting of his son soon became his most prized possession, far eclipsing any interest in the pieces for which museums around the world clamored. He told his neighbors it was the greatest gift he had ever received.

The following spring, the old man became ill and passed away. The art world was in anticipation! Unmindful of the story of the man's only son, but in his honor, those paintings would be sold at an auction. According to the will of the old man, all of the art works would be auctioned on Christmas Day, the day he had received his greatest gift.

The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings.

Dreams would be fulfilled this day; greatness would be achieved as many would claim, "I have the greatest collection."

The auction began with a painting that was not on any museum's list. It was the painting of the man's son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid. The room was silent.

"Who will open the bidding with $100?" he asked. Minutes passed. No one spoke.

From the back of the room came, "Who cares about that painting? It's just a picture of his son."

"Let's forget it and go on to the good stuff." More voices echoed in agreement.

"No, we have to sell this one first," replied the auctioneer. "Now, who will take the son?"

Finally, a friend of the old man spoke, "Will you take ten dollars for the painting? That's all I have. I knew the boy, so I'd like to have it."

"I have ten dollars. Will anyone go higher?" called the auctioneer.

After more silence, the auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice. Gone." The gavel fell.

Cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can get on with it and we can bid on these treasures!"

The auctioneer looked at the audience and announced the auction was over. Stunned disbelief quieted the room.

Someone spoke up and asked, "What do you mean it's over? We didn't come here for a picture of some old guy's son. And what about all of these other paintings? There are millions of dollars of art here! I demand that you explain what's going on here!"

The auctioneer replied, "It's very simple. According to the will of the father, whoever takes the son gets it all."

Just as those art collectors discovered on that Christmas Day, the message is still the same - the love of a Father, a Father whose greatest joy came from His Son, who went away and gave His life rescuing others.

And because of that Father's love, whoever takes the Son, gets it all!

Remember He is the Reason for the Season!

Merry CHRISTmas

Christ, Christmas, and the US Constitution

by David Gibbs, Jr. and David Gibbs, III on September 5, 2006; last featured December 19, 2016

The Bible is no longer widely accepted as the final authority in American culture. As a result, the Christmas season generates a multitude of questions from people who are confused and want to know whether they may wish someone "Merry Christmas," or whether their town may include religious decorations to celebrate the season.

Why do many Christians, and their communities and schools, fear to openly proclaim the religious significance of Christmas? We believe the reason is the confusion generated by "separationists."

Separationists are those who believe that openly celebrating the religious meaning of Christmas violates the U.S. Constitution by blurring the line between what they believe should be a separation of the roles of church and state. Their claims are generally based upon the mistaken belief that the doctrine of the separation of church and state is violated if the government acknowledges the birth of Jesus as the historical reason for celebrating December 25.



Photo courtesy photolibrary

This decades-old photo depicts a scene no longer familiar in the big city. Decorations such as these are not outlawed, just highly controversial in today's culture.

What Are the Legal Rules in Keeping Christ in Christmas?

In recent years, secular groups advocating the complete separation of church and state have been circulating misinformation about the legalities of public celebrations of Christmas, seeking to confine Christmas to the church or home. As a result, many public officials have been misled into believing that Christ must be removed from Christmas in public venues.

Despite these new assaults on Christmas, the Constitution does not require public officials to entirely obliterate religious themes or displays from public Christmas observances. In fact, no court has ever ruled that the Constitution prohibits Christmas carols, Christmas displays, or Christmas greetings in public streets, parks, schools, or commercial establishments, as long as the religious items are included along with secular symbols of the holiday season.

What Does the Constitution Say?

1. The Constitution continues to guarantee both freedom of speech and the free exercise of religion. Private religious speech, such as saying "Merry Christmas," even in public schools or workplaces, is protected speech.

2. Including a religious component along with secular symbols in public holiday displays and concerts does not violate the supposed "separation of church and state," a doctrine often cited by separationists as part of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. In fact, the U.S. Supreme Court has stated that the Establishment Clause requires neutrality, not censorship. With respect to

private holiday displays, nativity scenes may not be banned while other seasonal decorations are permitted.

Public decorations often depict only nonreligious symbols of a winter holiday, such as snowmen and reindeer. Schools and public areas are eliminating any religious music, and many businesses have banned the greeting "Merry Christmas." None of these measures are legally required by the Establishment Clause, despite what secular legal organizations hostile to the public recognition of Christianity would have us believe.
Now is not the time to lay down our spiritual arms and surrender to the very small percentage of Americans who are hostile toward Christianity and who want to eliminate all things religious, including Christmas, from our national life. Let us not only, with confidence, keep Christ in Christmas, but use this season as an opportunity to proclaim Him as the Creator *and* Savior.

You have more rights than you think

There are many opportunities to express the religious significance of Christmas.

1. Your children may sing Christmas carols during school concerts, as long as other secular songs are included in the selections. And your community or workplace is not required to ban religious content from their holiday celebrations.

2. Children may give religious gifts to their teachers or to other students, just as government and other employees may give religious greetings to coworkers.

3. A public school or local community may include religious items in a holiday or winter display, as long as they are part of a combined secular/religious display.

4. A public school student may write about his Christmas observations or discuss them in a class presentation, and a teacher is permitted to provide an objective explanation of the religious origins of Christmas as part of a curriculum about the cultural and religious aspects of national holidays. Government officials may also recognize the religious aspects of this celebration.

Abridged from the article "Christ, Christmas, and the Constitution" by Dr. David C. Gibbs, Jr., and Dr. David C. Gibbs III. Used by permission from the Christian Law Association (CLA), a legal missionary ministry at www.christianlaw.org.