



Why Christmas?

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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So there are only a few sleeps to go until December 25th.

Many of us have areas in our homes that are infiltrated with shiny packages holding large-screen televisions, new clothing and books that we will be giving to others. One last grocery shopping trip will secure the ingredients for the extensive menu that could feed twice as many guests as we expect. We are exhausted from all the Christmas parties, concerts and extras.

The car is fueled for travel that leads to the second or third Christmas feast of the season. Everywhere we turn there are decorated venues and we have heard "It's the hap happiest time of the year" for probably the hundredth time.

It's Christmas! The days when many over-eat, over-spend and get over-tired as we follow traditions and try to navigate all the hopes, plans and relationships that are vying for our attention.

Not everyone celebrates Christmas but everyone recognizes it as a time of year when people do things differently than in previous months.

Besides all the tinsel, it is also the time when it is important to tune out the Carols and dig under the packages for the true meaning of the whole thing.

Ancient scriptures focus on an entirely different reason for the season than what we see commercially. Please forgive me if I paraphrase and tell the story in my own words.

God wanted us to do well so gave us rules to help us make good choices. They are known as the Ten Commandments. Unfortunately, as human beings, we didn't do very well at following them. I think God must have been discouraged as he watched people mess up over and over again. There had to be a better way!

So, God introduced a new way of living and this began with the birth of a baby who became known as the "Christ". It was kind of weird because most of us wouldn't have chosen to have him be found in a barn with his young virgin mother Mary and a man who would serve as his earthly father, Joseph. We likely wouldn't have sent gold, frankincense and myrrh as baby gifts.

We probably would never have expected that this child would grow up, be tortured and die because his words were not believed or accepted. We might have incorrectly called him a rebel or some might even have tried to assess whether he had a mental health diagnosis when they didn't understand his actions.

We likely would never have imagined that God wanted us to accept this person as a mentor, comforter, liaison to God or as an entrance into heaven. But we wouldn't have done it God's way because we aren't God.

It is tradition for saints to have a mass or service on their birthdays to honour them. It makes sense then to recognize Christ's birthday as "Christ-mas" because December 25th is a special occasion to honour Christ's birth. Instead of going to a mass or service on December 25th, however, most replace the "mass" with a "party" to which they invite friends and family who share food and exchange gifts.

So, dig down deep underneath the wrappings and food and trimmings. It is time to allow your heart a little time to remember why we really get a couple of days off in order to celebrate an event that happened over two thousand years ago.

Why are you celebrating December 25th?

Merry "Christ-mas", everyone!