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Is True Religion *Love*?

By David Kidd

Many, many people believe if they are loving, if they don't hurt anyone and are kind and generous, then they have true religion. It sounds good doesn't it? It sounds true. But is it? Let me show how such a view may be deceptive, by telling a little story.

Once upon a time there was a man who truly loved a beautiful, beautiful princess. He serenaded her every night outside her balcony. He brought her red roses by the truckload. He built mighty palaces for her with his fortune. He did all he could, including paying the guards a bribe just to see her.

However, sadly, the princess hated and detested him. She didn't like his singing, because he couldn't sing. She didn't like his red roses. Her favourite flowers were carnations. She didn't like his palaces because she preferred a warm and humble cottage. She was upset that he made his fortune by ripping off the poor. Finally, she didn't like his unscrupulous conduct of bribing the guards.

This man, however, truly loved her in his heart. He loved her so much that when he realised she would never be his he made a replica of her and lived with her replica for the rest of his life on a deserted island.

What's the moral of the story then? The moral is you can genuinely say you love someone, or God, but if your idea of love is not their idea, or God's idea, then you'll never please them - you'll never please God. If you believe true religion is love, you must find out what God's idea of love exactly is. God is love, and love is extremely important to Him. God does tell us what love is in the Bible, and we need to be guided by His idea of love. If not, we will be like the poor man in the story. We will live our lives with only a replica of true religion and will miss out on the eternal satisfaction of the real thing.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and 1 John 5:1-3 provide valuable insight into God's idea of love.

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Cor.13:4-7

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. 1 John 5:1-3

A magazine dedicated to uplifting and transforming peoples lives through the uncompromised word of God.

THE UNREPENTANT

It seems from scripture that there will be those who, at their resurrection judgment and resulting condemnation, will exhibit a false display of sorrow at their imminent demise. Jesus illustrated this by using the recurring phrase of "weeping and gnashing of teeth". With teaching directed at those pseudo-religious folk of his day who lived a lie, Jesus said:

"But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out." (Luke 13:27-28)

"Weeping and gnashing of teeth" seems to convey an agonising mental anguish, a too-late-regret tinged with anger, a state of mind perhaps much like the peoples of Noah's day when they finally saw the rising flood waters. For years they had mocked God's faithful herald, as they witnessed Noah building a big, wooden ship. They sneered at the idea of a global storm. God was the butt of their jokes and derision. But when the flood came, it was by then too late! The door had closed. The ark was sealed. And those wicked outside perished at God's visitation. The account of Noah's experience is almost a metaphor of what is set to occur again.

There is no room in God's Kingdom for the unrighteous. God's

ultimate judgment is reflected in the closing words of the revelation given to John:

"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:7-8)

The finality of hell (Gehenna) fire is total and instant death, from which there is no longer any hope of redemption or resurrection. Hell isn't a place of perpetual suffering. It is simply the second and final death by fire. Any lingering traditions and folklore about hell that doesn't match scripture must be dismissed as myth. Jesus's words assure us of the finality of hell.



"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up... You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this," says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 4:1,3)

God offers everyone extraordinary hope in the saving work of Jesus Christ. The rich tapestry of salvation history throughout the scriptures, in the lives of those who have lived before us, forms and defines this thread of hope. And while we do not have all the answers, we do have the sure and adequate words of scripture, echoing Jesus' very own thoughts, for which we would do well to take to heart:

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:2)

The truth is that God is not willing that any should perish, and thus the journey to hell only begins when the Holy Spirit is scorned through the unrepentant sinful things those who hate God intentionally say and do. Jesus reminded his listeners of the ultimate price that awaits those who don't take him seriously:

"And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell." (Matthew 5:30)

Written by John Klassek

**Test Your Knowledge Answers,
Page eight.**

A. C. B. C.

In What Season Was Jesus Born?

If you ask most Christians the season in which Jesus was born, the majority would reply, in the winter time, on the 25th of December.

There is no denial that the birth of Jesus Christ took place in Palestine more than 2000 years ago, as recorded in the Gospels, and I know that we would all agree that it was a joyous event! But can we by studying history and the scriptures find evidence for the season Jesus was born in?

Let's start with Luke's Gospel account of Jesus' birth. (Luke 2:1-3, 6-11, 15)

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.

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 clothes, 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 Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

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."

Have you ever wondered why the shepherds were in the fields at night watching over their flocks? History shows that lambing season in Israel was about March/April (springtime in Israel) and the shepherds had to watch over their sheep day and night for the new born lambs. History also records that near Bethlehem the shepherds were not just normal shepherds, but shepherds of the Temple in Jerusalem. The place was called 'Migdal Edar', or the Tower of the Flock.



According to Edersheim in 'The Life And Times of Jesus The Messiah', Book 2, Chapter 6, states, "This Migdal Edar was not the watchtower for the ordinary flocks that pastured on the barren sheep ground beyond Bethlehem, but it lay close to the town, on the road to Jerusalem. A passage from the Mishnah (Shekelim 7:4) leads to the conclusion that the flocks which pastured there were destined for Temple sacrifices."

The ancient Jewish prophet Micah foretold the birthplace for the coming Messiah seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ. Micah said that the Son of God would be born in the little insignificant village near Jerusalem called Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2)

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."

The tower of the flock is also mentioned in Micah 4:8,

And you, O tower of the flock, The stronghold of the daughter of Zion, To you shall it come, Even the former dominion shall come, The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem."

History shows the shepherds would wrap the newborn lambs in swaddling clothes to protect the body of the lambs which would be offered as a sacrifice at the Temple, which was just six miles away. They were wrapped in swaddling clothes to keep the newborn lambs from hurting themselves and keep them without spot or blemish. Then they were laid in a manger until they calmed down. Later they were delivered to their mothers.



Swaddling Clothes: narrow bands of cloth formerly wrapped around a newborn child to restrain its movements and quiet it.

In Exodus 12:5, God commands, *"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year."* In Deuteronomy 17:1 it states, *"You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God a bull or sheep which has any blemish or defect, for that is an abomination to the LORD your God."*

Another interesting point to consider is that the Passover was held in springtime, between March and April. In 1 Corinthians 5:7b it states, *"For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."*

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, laid in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, without spot or blemish (perfect) and destined to be the sacrificial lamb for mankind. (1Peter 1:19)

To answer the question, *"In What Season Was Jesus Born"*, I believe springtime is the clearest understanding we have regarding the time of His birth. But more important is that the Saviour was born and He shed His blood for mankind, covering our sins and through Jesus' sacrifice, we can take hold of eternal life.

Written by Phil Kordahi

Suggestions For Success

from H. Jackson Brown Jr.

1. Marry the right person. This one decision will determine 90% of your happiness or misery.
2. Work at something you enjoy and that's worthy of your time and talent.
3. Give people more than they expect and do it cheerfully.
4. Become the most positive and enthusiastic person you know.
5. Be forgiving of yourself and others.
6. Have a grateful heart.
7. Treat everyone you meet like you want to be treated.
8. Be a self-starter.
9. Stop blaming others. Take responsibility for every area of your life.
10. Don't do anything that wouldn't make your Mom proud.



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THE ONE

The One who placed the stars in space
Makes snowflakes like soft spun lace.
The One who puts the sun to bed
Counts the hairs upon our heads.

The One who carved the awesome Alps
Sat the small child on His lap.
The One who fragrances the flowers
Keeps the world by His power.

The One who is called Judah's lion
Took on Himself a servant's mind.
The One whose strength knows no defeat
Stooped to wash His servant's feet.

The One who is the first and last
Pled that the cruel cup might pass.
The One who is the great I Am
Became the sacrificial lamb.

The One whose days are without end
Bled and died for sinful men.
The One who formed men from His breath
Rose from the grave...conquered death.

The One who keeps us in His care
Knows our thoughts and hears our prayers.
The One to whom our hearts must sing
Jesus our Lord, our God, our King!

Deanna Malawy

Will God Punish the Wicked Forever?

"Many Christians believe that a person who dies without Jesus Christ goes to hell at the moment of death to suffer eternally in the fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. This drastic doctrine may offer incentive for a few sinners to seek the Lord, but it has probably turned more people away from God and our Lord Jesus Christ than it has attracted.

The real issue about this doctrine is not how it impacts those who hear it, but whether it accurately reflects Holy Scripture. In this tract we will examine verses often used to support the doctrine of an everlasting hell..."

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I was thirsty

When God attracts your attention and you become a follower of Jesus Christ – a Christian – God also gives you special responsibilities. Not only are you blessed with wonderful hope but now you become part of the ongoing process of sharing it.

“Tell the good news everywhere,” says God in effect. “Do good, feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the homeless, visit those in jail; wherever you go, be lights in this world.”

And this is where we can sometimes misunderstand our Father’s desire for us. We say: While I’m happy to be a Christian “on the quiet” – this outreach is beyond me. It’s just not me! I don’t have the skills! I’m not that sort of person! Besides, I don’t have the resources or the time. It’s easy, I suppose, to give voice to our limited view.

But, did you know that God doesn’t ask more of us than what we already have? God says: (Mat 10:42) *“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones... he will certainly not lose his reward.”*

God is not asking for what we don’t already have! Anyone in a society like ours can procure a cup of cold, thirst-quenching water. What God is also looking for is a willing attitude. And as we live this way of life toward our fellow man, then God’s response is:

(Mat 25:35) “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, [36] I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me... whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

God treasures those selfless acts of service towards one another. It is, in effect, the essence of outreach that God is calling us to.

Written by John Klassek

Youth Vibe



Our Hearts Are Where Our Treasure Is



*What does Jesus instruct us to do regarding storing up treasures in this life?
Search the scriptures below to find the key understanding on the subject.*

Matthew 6: 19-21

Matthew 6:24

Matthew 6:31-33

Luke 12:14-15

Luke 12:16-21



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Near which holy day was Jesus crucified?

- a. Passover; b. Hannukah; c. Tabernacles;
- d. Sabbath

In which book is the prayer "Create in me a clean heart, O God" found?

- a. Proverbs; b. Ezekiel; c. Psalms;
- d. Deuteronomy

In which book of the Bible are the most commonly cited version of the Ten Commandments?

- a. Isaiah; b. Exodus; c. Genesis; d. Numbers

In which book is the phrase "*in the beginning was the Word*" found?

- a. Acts; b. Isaiah; c. John; d. Leviticus

Jesus the Messiah:



Prophecy Fulfilled

Bible prophecies offer convincing evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. Old Testament predictions about Jesus' birth, life, and ministry are quoted by New Testament writers to identify Him as the Messiah.

The purpose of this booklet is to review some of the more prominent prophecies that verify Jesus as "the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)

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