

Will the Real Christmas Jesus Please Stand Up?

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

In reality. In power. In intimacy.

When we see Jesus as He is, glorious and worthy of our deepest loyalties and affections, deserving of our total focus and supreme attention; we will catch fire inwardly and burn with holy fear, and a holy hunger for the Word will grip our hearts, and we will proclaim Him as He is. –Anonymous

We celebrate Christ's birth on Christmas, but for most, He is not the center of the rejoicing and celebration that marks this time of year. I think many of us would agree that Christmas has become so commercialized that Christ is hardly noticed, much less celebrated and revered.

Easter would be in the same category. How in the world a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ could've ever evolved into an affinity with Easter bunnies and Easter eggs, I'll never know. Such is the tenuous nature of idolatry.

Is it possible for Jesus Christ to be lost at Christmastime and in Christianity in general, the very religion that bears and professes His name? We know that without a relationship with Christ, just another religion is all that remains. We also know from Scripture that someone can profess to know Christ but in works actually deny Him (Titus 1:16). But isn't it also true that in works, many may profess to know Him, but in authentic heart-knowledge, they do not?

Who knew Jehovah in Old Testament times? That earthly system of Judaism was to point the way to Christ, but in actuality, it hid Him from the multitudes who were enmeshed in the works

of the law. The external had glossed over the need for the internal. Sin and death reigned in the old order of the Law and all its rituals and ceremonial rules and customs.

Isn't the same true today? There is an external order in modern Christianity that seems to rule, and it is quite evident during the Christmas holidays. Its emphasis on appearance, hype, professionalism, showmanship, production and commercialism that is prominent, especially during this time of year, tends to hide the real Jesus from us. It easily allows us to deceive ourselves into thinking somehow God is pleased with all this while Christ is glossed over.

Even many of our contemporary churches with their Madison Avenue tactics have become echo chambers for the latest trends in pop psychology, marketing, politics, entertainment and entrepreneurial leadership while the piercing revelation of Christ and His simple demands are often overlooked or packaged in a way to make Him palatable to the masses.

We have become all too enamored with our own glory in the kingdoms we are building, at times totally unaware of receiving that invisible kingdom "that cannot be shaken" (Heb. 12:27c).

Judaism with all its forms, rituals and framework began its removal 2,000 years ago and was replaced with a spiritual, heavenly standard established in the New Covenant. And now, this end time marks once again the removal of all that is external to bring us to a forcing point, and it is this:

After all is said and done, how much of the Christ do you really have? Not what you do, not what you've built, not what you have, not all the shopping and gift giving and receiving done at Christmas time, not even the noble activities which constitute your Christian life, but how much of the Christ Himself have you got?

He longs for your intimacy. {eoa}

This is an excerpt from *The Real Jesus*.