



# BEING THANKFUL AT CHRISTMAS!

## Christmas Is About Being Thankful

**Psalm 34:8** O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

**Isaiah 9:6-7** For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

### I. Grateful

Feeling or showing an appreciation of kindness; thankful conscious of benefit received: for what we are about to receive make us truly thankful

- A. expressive of thanks, thankful service
- B. well pleased: GLAD - was thankful that it didn't rain
  - appreciativeness    gratefulness    indebtedness    sense of obligation
  - praise    responsiveness    thankfulness

### II. Jesus is born in Bethlehem!

- A. **Luke 2:1-7** And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 ([And] this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. 6 And so it was, that,

while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should 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.

- B. **Luke 2:8-21** And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this [shall be] a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, good will toward men. 15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they had seen [it], they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard [it] wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered [them] in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. 21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

C. Bethlehem

1. Luke 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)
2. Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

3. 2 Samuel 5:7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same [is] the city of David.

### **III. There are monuments & holidays to birthplaces of great ones of history**

- People who have done great things have been researched and their hometowns became landmarks. This is recorded in the Bible also. George Washington Birthplace National Monument was established in 1930-32 through the efforts of many who wanted to preserve the history of the United States.

### **IV. To have a day of remembrance is in keeping with traditions of having days and monuments to the great ones of history.**

A. This man was born there

B. **Psalm 87:1-7** [[A Psalm [or] Song for the sons of Korah.]] His foundation [is] in the holy mountains. 2 The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. 3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah. 4 I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this [man] was born there. 5 And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. 6 **The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, [that] this [man] was born there.** Selah. 7 As well the singers as the players on instruments [shall be there]: all my springs [are] in thee.

### **V. History**

- A. In New England it was illegal to celebrate Christmas for about 25 years in the 1600's; the Puritans hated the holiday, and if the Catholic Church gradually came to embrace Christmas, the Protestant Reformation gave the holiday a good knock on the chin. In the 16th century, Christmas became a casualty of this church schism; with reformist-minded Protestants considering it little better than paganism. In England under Oliver Cromwell, Christmas and other

saints' days were banned, and in New England it was illegal to celebrate Christmas for about 25 years in the 1600s.

- B. If you want to look at a real 'War on Christmas', you've got to look at the Puritans - They banned it
- C. The Bible as History says: "December 25 is referred to in documents as Christmas Day in A.D. 324 for the first time. Under the Roman emperor Justinian [A.D. 527-565], it was recognized as an official holiday. An old Roman festival played a major part in the choice of this particular day. December 25 in ancient Rome was the 'Dies Natali Invictus,' 'the birthday of the unconquered,' the day of the winter solstice and at the same time, in Rome, the last day of the Saturnalia, which had long since degenerated into a week of unbridled carnival..."
- D. Meteorologists as well as historians and astronomers have something of importance to contribute to this question of fixing the date of the birth of Jesus. According to Luke: And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night (Luke 2:8).
- E. Weathermen have made exact recordings of the temperature at Hebron. Hebron exhibits the same climatic conditions as Bethlehem, which is close by. The temperature readings show over a period of three months that the incidence of frost is as follows: December 29 degrees; January 30 degrees; February 31 degrees. The first two months have also the greatest rainfall in the year: approx 6 inches in December, and nearly 8 inches in January.
- F. According to all existing information the climate of Palestine has not changed appreciably in the last 2,000 years, consequently modern meteorological observations can be taken as a basis.
- G. **At Christmas-time, Bethlehem is in the grip of frost, and in the Promised Land no cattle would have been in the fields in that temperature.** In the Talmud it records the effect that in that neighborhood the flocks were put out to grass in March and brought in again at the beginning of November. They remained out in the open for almost eight months. Around Christmastime presently, both animals and shepherds are under cover in Palestine. Luke tells us enough to point to the birth of Jesus having taken place BEFORE or AFTER the

onset of winter..." They may have been watching the flocks in the fields before the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb or just prior to the Easter time frame.

**H. No matter what is going on around us this season, Jesus was born, and that's something to celebrate. Emmanuel—"God with us."**

1. **Take Time to Rest** It's important to focus on what really matters-and no matter how busy you get, don't forget to spend time with God, even if it's just reading and praying through one Psalm before you start your day. Skipping devotions is like cramming yourself with pie, cake and cookies and ignoring the ham and potatoes because you're afraid you won't have room: it doesn't help the problem and usually just makes you feel sick. Take some advice from "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear": "Rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing."
2. **Take Time to Contemplate.** If you've experienced loss-the death of a loved one, a relationship, a dream-it's okay to be sad, especially during the holidays. The miracle of Christmas is that God cared enough about us to come into our dreary, broken world and live among us.
3. **Take Time to Worship.** When it comes down to it, Christmas isn't about us and how we celebrate or appear to others. It's all about Jesus, a chance to be thankful for a God who didn't leave us alone. He doesn't always take away the stress or the sorrow-but he walks with us through it.
4. **Most of all, take time to be thankful.** Take time to be thankful for Jesus' birth and what it means, both with your family and in personal devotional time.

Jesus, I am thankful  
for everything in my life!

