

CHRISTIAN AWARENESS FELLOWSHIP

STILL CHRISTMAS MISTLETOE GIFTS HO HO HO CANDY CANES SILENT NIGHT FATHER CHRISTMAS ANGELS
 SHEPHERDS MESSIAH TREE NOG SNOWFLAKES CHURCH BELLS MANGER GOLD FRANKINCENSE MYRRH
 WREATHS CAROLING INN STABLE ELVES REJOICE BETHLEHEM BABY PEACE ON EARTH CHESTNUTS THE HOLLY
 AND THE IVY SLEIGHRIDE YULE TIDE SANTA CLAUS JOY GOOD WILL TO ALL STOCKINGS CANDY CANES
 EVERGREEN ADVENT JINGLE BELLS CHIMNEY REINDEER STAR OF BETHLEHEM DECK THE HALLS FELIZ NAVIDAD

CHRISTMAS

DOES THE BIBLE FORBID CHRISTMAS TREES ?

In Jeremiah 10 beginning at verse two we read,

Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. 3: For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. 4: They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

Some believers think this passage forbids Christians to have a Christmas tree for decoration. But this is not what the prophet is saying in context. At that time in history there was no Christmas. Rather, Jeremiah was warning against idols of false worship. Notice the next verse:

5: They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.

Believers are free to decorate with a Christmas tree or any other item. The only stipulation is that all things be done to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31), and no one should use liberty to create an offense (Rom. 14:16).

QUESTION:

How can Christ the Son be referred to as the "Everlasting Father" in Isaiah 9:6? Doesn't this mean the Father and the Son are the same person?

CHRISTMAS FACTOIDS

The Christmas tree originated in the ancient celebrations of Saturnalia. Martin Luther is credited with introducing the practice of putting candles on trees to celebrate Christmas. (Isaiah 60:13).

The early Church celebrated the Resurrection, not the birth of Christ. Christmas was officially recognized by the Church in the mid 5th Century.

Because of Pagan influences the Puritans rejected Christmas and deliberately chose to work December 25th to show their disdain. In 1644 England passed a law making Dec. 25th an official working day (Rom. 14:5, 6).

In 336 the Emperor Constantine declared Christ's birthday as an official Roman holiday. Some Church leaders opposed it, but the holiday has prevailed.

CHRISTMAS PROPHECIES FULFILLED

Num. 24:17	Matt. 2:1 - 2
Isaiah 7:14	Matt. 1:18 - 25
Michah 5:2	Matt. 2:1 - 6 &
	Luke 2:1 - 7
Isaiah 11: 1 - 3	Matt. 1:1 - 17; 3:16
Deut. 18: 15 - 19	John 7:40

PAGAN ORIGINS AND INFLUENCES IN CHRISTMAS

The Roman Festival of Saturnalia

Temple decorations of greenery and candles

Saxons religious use of holly and ivy

Druid worship of mistletoe

Feasting Christmas Trees Parades

Special music December 25th Gift giving

Lighted candles "Deck The Halls"

The Bible makes only two references to angels singing: at the time of Creation (Job 38:7); and at the removal of the curse of sin (Revelation 5:8-10).

The candy cane was created to symbolize Jesus Christ: White for the virgin birth and Christ's sinlessness; hard candy for Christ the solid rock; the shape of "J" for Jesus; a cane for Good Shepherd; and red stripes for His pain and shed blood on the cross.

GOD WITH US: The Miracle of Christmas, by Dr. John MacArthur

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the pinnacle of Christianity, but Christmas probably is the biggest holiday. Many Christians probably know the story so well they can recite it in their sleep. Thanks to Dr. John MacArthur, believers can gain a new, richer appreciation of Christ's incarnation in his book, "God With Us." He begins, "Our Christmases are the product of an odd mixture of pagan ideas, superstition, fanciful legends, and plain ignorance. The real message of Christmas is all but lost in the chaos. Let's try to sort it out."

MORE CHRISTMAS FACTOIDS

The word, "bedlam" is a corruption of the word, "Bethlehem." It refers to the noise and confusion that symbolized the insane asylum, "St. Mary of Bethlehem," a London monastery serving as a hospital in the 1500s.

The first Christmas card is believed to have been sent by a British army officer in 1844. The first commercial printing of Christmas cards took place in England in 1846. Some Christians were against them because they depicted people drinking. Americans spend over \$1 billion on Christmas cards annually.

Santa Claus probably originated in the fourth-century with bishop Saint Nicholas. The American name is derived from the Dutch name, Sinterklaus. Clement Moore, an American poet, popularized the myth in 1822 when he wrote, "A Visit from St. Nicholas" - "Twas the night before Christmas..."

John MacArthur brings us wonderful insights into the Christmas story - biblical, historical, cultural and practical. To begin he presents Old Testament preparations for the coming Messiah as he writes about *A Christmas Prophecy*. Then he reveals God's incredible grace in the lineage of the Messiah with his account of *Knots on the Family Tree*.

John explains the incredible significance of the *Virgin Birth*, reminds us of the Messiah's obscurity in *The People Who Missed Christmas*, highlights his deity in *God in a Manger*; unravels popular exaggeration in *Who Were the Wise Men?*,

and reminds us that the most important aspect of Christ's coming was that he was *Born to Die*.

Dr. MacArthur concludes with an invitation to *Come, Let Us Adore Him*. He writes, "I'm saying *Christmas should be a time of worship...we need to start all over. We need to begin with worship, and let our worship rule how we celebrate the holiday.*"

Enrich your worship this Christmas season by reading "God With Us." You'll be glad you did.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

The Bible tells us there is a supernatural dimension to reality. Scripture also tells us that mankind is in

rebellion against God, always seeking a natural explanation for what is observed and experienced in the physical universe. This is true of the star that led the magi to Jesus. We read in Matthew 2:9
...and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

Plainly the star which led the Magi to Jesus was supernatural - not an alignment of planets, a comet, or other natural event.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

The virgin birth is an essential truth of Christianity. In order to preserve his deity, Jesus had to be born of a virgin, otherwise Joseph and Mary would have conceived a new, mortal being. The eternal God took on human flesh and became, uniquely, the God-Man.

Technically "virgin" (almah) in Scripture could be translated, "young girl." But this discounts the context and intent of the message. The term appears nine times in the Old Testament and 8 of those 9 times the word must mean "virgin."

ANSWER:

Isaiah 9:6 does not say that Jesus the Son is God the Father. "Everlasting Father" may be better understood as "The Father of Eternity." It is a reference to Christ as Creator. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are individual persons, yet one God.

The triunity of the godhead is a mystery beyond our comprehension.