

## **A Christmas Meditation: "What makes Jesus so special?"**

December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022



As most of you know well, Jesus was born in a stable, a lowly place fit for animals not humans (Luke 2:1-7). He grew up poor, without privilege or comfort. His family and all the Jewish people lived in a land occupied by Roman soldiers, who could be heartless, cruel, and brutal at times. At one point, they even had to flee to Egypt to save Jesus's life, when one of the Jewish collaborators, King Herod, sought to kill all the Jewish children two years old and under (Matt. 2:16-20). Yet, this poor, underprivileged, at-risk Jewish boy, whose birth we celebrate on Christmas day, rose to become the Savior of the world for all those who put their faith in him.

It's truly an amazing turn of events. As one author put it years ago, Jesus's life is the greatest story ever told. His poverty wasn't bad karma. And his rise wasn't good luck. Jesus's birth, life, death, and resurrection were all one big demonstration of the incredible love and power of God to save the world. Jesus's story, his teaching, and the Gospel he preached shouted out, "God sees you in your pain, suffering, and struggle! No matter how poor, disadvantaged, or marginalized you might be, God loves you. Repent of your sins and put your faith in God's son, Jesus, and you will know the full measure of God's grace and forgiveness." (John 3:16; Luke 24:47) And once you enter into this new relationship with God through faith in Jesus, nothing will ever be able to separate you from God's love, in this life or the next. (Romans 8:31-39)

This is the true meaning of Christmas. It's not about power, privilege, material possessions, glitter, or parties. It's not something just for a few ethnic minority groups or people in the West. It's about Jesus. And it's about what Jesus did for the whole world by giving hope to even the most hopeless people in the most hopeless of circumstances.

As such, Christmas is rightly a time of great celebration. It's a wonderful time to eat special foods, give and receive gifts, laugh and enjoy the love and friendship of those we hold most dear. But Christians do not party at Christmas time to forget their troubles, or look for life in material things, food, and drink, as some may be doing over the holidays. No, followers of Jesus celebrate joyfully because he has given us something precious that no one can take away from us. Through faith, believers have entered into a loving, grace-filled, hopeful relationship with God that will last for eternity.

This is what makes Jesus and Christmas so special for me. I hope this is true for you, too. It can be, if you will put your faith in God's love and in Jesus for yourself. Merry, blessed Christmas, my dear students, colleagues, and friends. You are in my thoughts and prayers every day.

With the love of Jesus, always,  
Dr. Tim