

Jesus the Baby and Jesus the Adult

Joe Slater

Everything we know from Scripture indicates either spring or autumn as the time when Jesus was born. Nevertheless, much of the world has set aside December 25 as the date of His birth. Rather than launch into a rant excoriating people for their misunderstanding, I recommend that we take advantage of a season when most of our neighbors are at least in a positive frame of mind about Jesus. Understanding who He is, what He did, and what He requires of us outweighs any concerns about the date of His birth.

Who can help but love a newborn baby? He's tiny and sweet and innocent and helpless. Everyone with a heart loves baby Jesus in the manger. As a baby, He makes no demands on us. We don't even have to hear Him cry when He's hungry, or when He needs changed. In our minds we picture Him lying there quietly – no muss, no fuss.

Jesus the grown-up is an entirely different matter. Multitudes who practically swoon over Jesus the baby are not nearly so keen on Jesus the adult. After all, the grown man Jesus says things that are politically incorrect and makes demands that many find offensive. *"I am the light of the world"* (John 8:12). Even some religious folks find that statement arrogant and presumptuous. *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (John 14:6). This flies in the face modern notions of tolerance and inclusiveness.

"If you do not believe that I am He (i.e. the Christ), you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). *"Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:3). *"Follow Me"* (Matthew 9:9). Not only follow Me, but *"deny (yourself), take up (your) cross, and follow Me"* (Matthew 16:24). Worldly minds find these outrageous!

We must help our neighbors to understand that this is the same Jesus Who was born in Bethlehem and lay in that manger. He really is the Son of God, and He has every right to say what He says and require our whole-hearted trust and obedience. In due time we can correct the errors commonly associated with His birth (no, He wasn't born in December, nor did the wise men visit the manger, nor did the shepherds follow a star). But let's get first things first.

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There's a Beautiful Place Called Heaven

From Rev. 21:9-22:5, we have an incredible description of heaven. Even though symbolic in language, we can still get an idea of what heaven is like.

* Heaven is a **Beautiful** Place (Rev. 21:9-27). When John describes the most beautiful place which consists of nothing of the earth, he has to describe it in terms that we can relate to, thus he used precious gems, streets of gold, etc. There is no greater preciousness and beauty than what will exist in heaven.

* Heaven is a **Bountiful** Place (Rev. 22:1-2). John also describes heaven as a place where there is no want – everything is provided in the highest quantity and quality. In it is perfect life and health.

* Heaven is a **Blissful** Place (Rev. 22:3-5). John also wanted to remind us that heaven is a place of personal and permanent association with God – a place of peace and joy and love – forever!

--Edd Sterchi (Campellsville, KY) via Bulletin Gold

HE CARES

A little boy called his grandfather to explain that he had been delayed because his friend had broken a toy. "Did you help him fix it?" asked the grandfather. "No, it couldn't be fixed," replied the boy, "but I sat down and cried with him. Grandfather, it's a terrible thing when you have to cry alone."

Paul urged that same attitude in Romans 12:15, telling his readers to *"rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."* One great blessing of being a Christian is that we do not have to weep alone. Our brothers and sisters stand ready to shed tears with us in our sorrow. They are concerned when we are concerned. The outpouring of prayer and love for those who have loved ones in the military and in harm's way is a great example of this Christ-like attitude.

Sometimes, however, we feel that not even our brothers and sisters understand the pain we are feeling. In such cases, we have the ultimate blessing of a Savior who weeps with us as He did with Mary and Martha in the long ago. The prophet Isaiah said, *"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . ."* (53:4). Let us remember to follow the instructions of Peter when he said, *"casting all of your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you"* (1 Peter 5:7).

--Ron Stough (Duncan, OK) via Old Paths

"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15, 16).