

## What Are You Doing To Your Children?

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

In our previous email we wrote, *Would Jesus celebrate Christmas, a holiday of pagan origin which assimilated pagan practices and was then declared “Christian” by ecclesiastic hierarchy?* The celebrations of neither Christmas nor Easter are in the Bible. Rather, both were adaptations of pagan religious practices by revisionist theologians. They compromised the truth of Scripture by adding on unbiblical practices to attract unbelievers into the fold. We know that some who are reading this are already caught up in what advertisers term “**the spirit of Christmas,**” or “**the miracle of Christmas**” or the nebulous catchphrase “**just have faith**”. Hallmark, Lifetime and other media channels are certainly effective in peddling the “Christmas miracle” label that’s devoid of the Incarnate Lord but show good things happening to people no matter what they believe. And many of these romanticized shows focus particularly on vulnerable divorced people who finally find their true “soul mate” and “forever happiness” at Christmas.

We noted in our last email that most Christians don’t even recognize the extent to which their lives and morals have been impacted by the media and the society around them — and that the impact of the world’s ways is far greater than the Person of Jesus is in affecting their values, goals and decisions. This reality saddens us, because self-identified Christians are straddling religious fences while compromising with the world’s ways — and believing that our Father doesn’t mind if they bend to the world’s standards.

This is why we feel so strongly in writing this warning to you. Neither the widely marketed, people-pleasing “*spirit of Christmas*” or “*miracle of Christmas*” or “*just have faith — it’s Christmas!*” are something you should be mingling with the reality of our Lord Jesus. These worldly-inspired slogans bring down His righteous reputation and why He came. Far better for you to leave Jesus totally out of the self-indulgent holiday celebrations which so captivate unbelievers than allow Santa and greed to be mixed with the holy Lord of lords.

If our Lord Jesus would have you celebrate His first coming, •He would have you celebrate the New Covenant which He has made possible through His death. •He would have you filled with appreciative joy that you can now be reconciled with His Father and filled with His Spirit so you can do our Father’s will. •He would have you celebrate that the penalty for your sins has been fully paid and that by repentance and trust you can live to fulfill His purposes for your life. •All of this joy would freely flow out of your heart and your mouth to your children especially this time of year because you are keenly aware of your own sinful depravity and are so grateful for the Spirit of Christ at work in and through you. •God Himself in His loving mercy did something for you that you could never have accomplished for yourself.

 **NOW THAT’S A REASON TO CELEBRATE AND HAVE HEAVEN CELEBRATE WITH YOU!**

## What Are You Doing To Your Children?

Matthew chapter 18 is often cited in reference to our Lord's commands for His called-out ones: •in having the humble trust of a child (vv.1-5); •in dealing with the unrepentant (vv.15-17); •in trusting the authority of two or three together to apply God's commands to their lives (vv.18-20); •in knowing what our heavenly Father does to those who refuse to forgive others (vv.21-35). But rarely do Christians pay heed to the condemnation of those who cause children to sin (vv.6,7). Just how serious is this sin from our Lord's perspective?

*"If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble [to be ensnared], it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble — who set the snare! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!"* (Matthew 18:6,7).

Let's see how our Lord's warning applies to this holiday season. In our discussion, it's important to understand how God created our brains to function. You develop memories during your childhood which are colored by your childhood imaginations — what you perceived to be real or not. But later in your life as an adult, those same childhood imaginations can influence how you remember. Research has shown that our brains can distinguish between reality and fantasy because real things tend to have a higher degree of personal relevance to us than fictional things do. For example, when research participants answer questions about their friends and family (people with a **high degree of personal relevance** to an individual), stronger activation occurs in certain regions of the brain. When they answer questions about famous people, there is just medium activation. But when asked about fictional characters or fantasy, **brain activation is low**.

So how does this tie in with combining Santa with the birth of Jesus in your Christmas celebration? If you combine the reality of Jesus with the fantasy of Santa and elves in a child's mind, you are diminishing the **high personal relevance of Jesus** later in life for that child. As a child matures and discards the **low relevance of fantasies** like Santa and elves, they will also discard the low relevance of Jesus as a "fantasy". If later on Jesus does show up as having any relevance to that person, it's only as a "pseudo Santa" Who exists to make them happy.

Sin or repentance, which should be highly relevant in someone who is considering an authentic relationship with Christ, are instead meaningless topics to him or her. To the self-focused individual who has boxed Jesus into their imagination as a perpetual Vending Machine, the reason Jesus became man and sacrificed Himself has little relevance at all. Yet too many evangelistic crusades and even clergy make their appeal to adults to come to Jesus because He will make your life happy — a dotting "Santa" version of our Lord and Savior. **Woe to the person who affirms such lies...**

One last point about children. Putting your children into Sunday school is an outgrowth of well-meaning English Christians in past centuries who reached out to impoverished un-

believing street kids to teach them God's Word. But this practice has become so entrenched within western Christianity in particular that you look like a bad parent if you *don't* put your child into a Sunday School class. But taking over what parents, fathers especially, should be teaching at home and modeling for their children is a demonic ploy using the religious establishment as its setting. Too many fathers are **outsourcing** their God-given responsibilities to other people to do it for them. For more about the sin of outsourcing your family, see: [\*\*Practice 3. Turning The Hearts Of Fathers To Their Children\*\*](#)

Please take to heart what we're sharing in this email. You may be jeopardizing yourself and your child(ren) because of religious leaders who rely on the methods and programs which the society around them uses. (They want your family to be "happy" so that you'll keep coming.) We urge you to find out for yourself what our Lord Jesus is calling you to do in your own family. And when it comes to outsourcing your children, consider this warning from our Lord in Matthew 18:10:

*"See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father in heaven."*

Children are precious to our Lord Jesus and He wants the people He has blessed with children to use every means and opportunity at their disposal to raise them as His. We home schooled our own son because we wanted his education to be custom-designed for him to see our Lord at work in everything he was taught. And in the home churches in which we were part of, we never separated the children from the adults because we were collectively engaged in loving them as Jesus would. The children were always an integral part of our gatherings because their angels saw the face of our Father in heaven. Whatever else that means, we know that treasuring these little ones because our Father does is essential!

When it comes to your child(ren) being welcomed into heaven, please make the heart behind our Lord's words the hallmark of your love toward your children. With even more intensity than a shepherd searching diligently for a lost sheep does our Lord want you as a parent (or grandparent) to do all you can to lead these young into His fold of life: *"In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish"* (Matthew 18:14).

We know that for many of you what we're writing will further strengthen your resolve about how you lovingly raise a *godly generation* in your family. But for the halfhearted lukewarm whom our Lord Jesus says He will vomit out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16), please take heed and repent. If you refuse to take Jesus at His word with obedient trust, you will be ensnaring your children through the world's traps and leading them into condemnation.

**Mike & Sue**

PS Years ago a wise man said that when it comes to walking Jesus' path in obedient and grateful trust, stay away from anything that isn't of Him. In his words, "Others may, but those who are true to Jesus may not."

Those who belong to Jesus are here on earth to reach the world for Him and disciple them — not to have the world disciple us in its ways.