The True Meaning of Christmas

Well first of all, I’d like to thank all you guys for being here today because this is obviously Christmas morning and it also happens to be on a Sunday, you know, the day we’re supposed to gather together and worship God as Christians. And you’d think that this would be the greatest attendance ever, one being Christmas and two it’s on a Sunday, right? Very convenient. Yet, the trend across America, even in the Church folks, is that if Christmas falls on a Sunday... it’s the least attended service. In fact, some Churches actually cancel services, if you can believe that. And folks, believe it or not, I think I know why. It’s simply this. People have forgotten The True Meaning of Christmas. And I’m not talking about the pagan rituals that parallel this holiday. That’s not what I’m here to address. Rather, what I’m talking about is the time we Christians say we’re celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ into this world. The time when He came to die on a cross for our sins and the sins of the world. The time when He came to take the death penalty in our place for our crimes against God. Okay, that’s what I’m talking about!

Contrary to popular opinion, Christmas is not about shooting your eye out, it’s not about getting a nifty leg lamp, it’s not about having to eat
Chinese food instead of ham on this day, it’s not about Santa Claus, and it’s not even about getting your tongue stuck to the flag pole. It’s about celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ into this world so that you and I could have a beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe. Now that’s what Christmas is supposed to be about! But don’t take my word for it. Let’s listen to God’s.

Matthew 2:1-12 “After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.” When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.’”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.”

Now folks, I’m sure that most of us are very familiar with this passage of Scripture when it comes to the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, especially every year around Christmas time, hello! Okay, but here’s my
point. Tucked away in this passage is a very important clue as to the True Meaning of Christmas, the True Purpose of Jesus’ First Coming into this world and that is this. To have a **personal Divine relationship with Him**.

And that’s found in the phrase there, Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh. This is what most people miss. I’ll never forget the first time I came across this nugget in an old Jewish Custom and Mannerism book that I have. And in this particular one, there’s a section dealing with the Jewish Customs and Mannerisms for Marriage. And in one part it talks about the items that a Bride and Groom would adorn themselves with just prior to their marriage ceremony. And can anybody guess, what three items the Groom would adorn himself with when it was time to **go get his bride**? That’s right, Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh.

And granted some would say that the Gold was used to aid in his flight to Egypt, for monetary reasons, and the Frankincense and Myrrh were symbolic of His death to come. And that could be, I’m not discounting that. But I do find it interesting that, **it just so happens**, that the Bible also talks about us being the **Bride of Christ** and here we see Jesus being given the **exact three items** that a Groom adorns Himself with when it was time to go get his bride. I don’t think that’s by chance. And it makes also me wonder, if this is not what the myriad of angels that appeared to the shepherds were
also rejoicing over, that the time had finally come, for their Lord and ours, to go get His Bride. They’re busting out in praise! Why? Because they knew what we have long forgotten, that the True Purpose of Jesus First Coming, the True Purpose of Christmas, if you will. This is what we should be busting out in praise over. This is what we should be celebrating. That Jesus has come, so that you and I could have a beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe! So much so that we would actually be called His Bride! Do you catch the intimacy there? Not some dry, stale, boring, man-made religion like we’ve unfortunately turned it into. No! But a beautiful Bride-like relationship with the Creator of the Universe. Isn’t that awesome!

In fact, that passage in Matthew is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to learning the True Purpose of Jesus’ First Coming. If you continue to study the Jewish Customs and Mannerisms you’re going to see it all over the place. Believe it or not, Jesus went to great lengths to make sure we got this point, and that’s seen when we compare our relationship with Him in the Bible, to the 7 Phases of a Jewish Marriage Ceremony.

The first phase is the “Shiddukhin” or the “Match.” You see, unlike today, Jewish marriages were arranged by the fathers. And what the father would do is get a person do be the “matchmaker” and go find a bride
for the son. And gee folks, guess what? That’s exactly what the Bible says Jesus did for you and I.

**John 15:16** “You did not choose Me, but I chose you...”

**John 6:37;44** “All that the Father gives me will come to me...No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I’d say that’s pretty interesting, how about you? In fact, if you keep thinking about it, you’ll see that’s exactly what we’re doing when we get saved. We’re accepting Jesus’ love proposal to be “matched” or married to Him forever.

Oh but that’s not all. The **second phase** in a Jewish marriage ceremony was called the “**Mohar**” or the “**Bride Price.**” Now right after the “match” was made, a mohar or bride price was hashed out between both parties over the value of the Bride. And gee folks, guess what? That’s exactly what the Bible says Jesus did for you and I. In fact, the price He paid was extremely high!

**1 Corinthians 6:20** “You are not your own. For you have been bought with a price...”

**1 Peter 1:18** “Knowing that your were not redeemed with perishable things...but with precious blood...the blood of Christ.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I’d say that’s a pretty high bride price, don’t you think? And if Jesus paid **that big of a price** for us, then I’d say He must love us an awful lot, how about you?
Oh, but that’s not all. The **third phase** in a Jewish marriage ceremony was called the “**Mattan**” or the “**love gifts**.” Now in this phase, the groom would offer the bride gifts **even though he didn’t have to.** He simply did it as an expression of his love for her. And gee, guess what folks? That’s exactly what the Bible said Jesus did for you and I. He gave us some awesome love gifts! Check it out for yourself.

**ETERNAL LIFE:** **John 10:27-28** “My sheep hear My voice and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.”

**PEACE:** **John 14:27** “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you…”

**FORGIVENESS:** **1 John 1:9** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

**JOY:** **John 15:11** “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but I’d say those are some pretty awesome “love gifts,” how about you? And what you have to keep in mind is that these “love gifts” are voluntary. Jesus didn’t have to give them. Therefore, I’d say He sure must love us an awful lot, how about you?

Oh, but that’s not all. The **fourth phase** in a Jewish marriage ceremony was called the “**Shiluhim**” or the “**dowry**.” Now in this phase, the Father of the bride would give her gifts. And the purpose of these gifts was to help equip her for her new life with the groom. And gee, guess what
folks? That’s exactly what the Bible says God the Father has done for you and I. Listen to how He equipped us.

THE SPIRIT TO LIVE FOR HIM: John 14:16-17 “And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper…that is the Spirit of truth.”

SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO SERVE HIM: Romans 12:6 “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.”

AN ENGAGEMENT RING TO REMEMBER HIM: 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 “Now He who established us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.”

Now folks, the word “pledge” there is actually the Greek word for “engagement ring.” And people the Bible says that God gives us the Holy Spirit as a reminder that one day we’ll be with Him forever, just like the reminder of an engagement ring. What a gift, huh?

Oh, but that’s not all. The fifth phase in a Jewish marriage ceremony was called the “Ketubah” or the “marriage contract.” Now in this phase, the marriage was legally formalized by a written marriage contract called the ketubah. And it recorded the bride price, the promises of the groom, and the rights of the bride. And gee, guess what folks? That’s exactly what the Bible says God has done for you and I. How? By giving us the New Contract or covenant stated by Jesus Himself.

1 Corinthians 11:25 “In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’”
People, whether you realize it or not, every time we take communion, it’s a reminder of our marriage contract with Jesus. And I don’t know about you, but if Jesus signed our marriage contract with **His own blood** then gee I’d say it’s pretty secure, how about you?

Oh, but that’s not all. The **sixth phase** in a Jewish marriage ceremony was called the “**kiddushin**” or the “**betrothal**.” Now it was here that after the **marriage contract was signed** that the couple became what was called betrothed. And even though this meant they were legally married, they still didn’t live together. **Why**? Because they still had to go and make preparations for their new life together. **For instance**, the groom had to go back to his father’s house and start building an addition to the house called the bridal chamber. And it was here that they would consummate their marriage and settle down and live together as a family. And gee, guess what folks? That’s exactly what the Bible says Jesus is doing **right now** for you and I.

**John 14:2-3** “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

Now folks, I don’t know about you, but if God took 6 days to create the heavens and the earth in all its majesty, then can you imagine how incredible our bridal chamber is if Jesus’ been working on it for two
thousand years?

Oh, but that’s not all. The **seventh and final stage** in the Jewish wedding ceremony was the “**nissuin**” or “**the taking.**” Now once the chamber was completed, the Father would inspect it and tell the son, “Okay, go get your bride.” And what was the neat romantic thing about this was the Jewish bride had no idea when he was coming. **It could be at anytime.** Therefore, she always had to be ready for his sudden arrival. And when he did, he would **take** or **abduct** her and whisk her away to the Father’s house. And gee, guess what folks? That’s exactly what the Bible says we need to be ready for! **Why?** Because Jesus could come at any moment and abduct us, His bride, the Church.

**1 Thessalonians 4:16,17** “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout…Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

Now folks, I don’t know if you know this or not, but the words “caught up” is where we get our word “rapture” from. And what it literally means is a “catching or snatching away” just like an **abduction.** Hmmm. Now, I don’t know about you but I’d think after two thousand years, Jesus’ got to be getting close to finishing that Bridal Chamber, right? Therefore, wouldn’t it make sense to make sure we’re ready to go? In other words, **we need to be ready** for the **abduction.** Why? Because one day, the Bible says,
it’s going to be too late. The offer to become a Bride of Christ isn’t always
going to be there. I didn’t say that, Jesus did!

**Matthew 25:1-13** “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ ‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’ Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

Folks, the good news is this. The Bible really is a **Divine Romance Book** if you stop and think about it! It’s a **Cosmic Love Story** of how God has made a way for us, you and I His creation, to enter into a beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with Him, the Creator of the Universe!

It’s awesome! But the bad news is, one day, as Jesus said, if you don’t respond to this wonderful truth, the True Purpose of His First Coming, the True Purpose of Christmas, what we should be celebrating today, if you will, you’re going to be shut out, the door is going to be closed to the **Marriage Supper of the Lamb**, and one day, you might find yourself at a Church and
every true Bride of Christ, every wise virgin has disappeared in a flash.
Mock all you want but one day it’s going to happen. Therefore, you need to
be ready!

Jesus is coming back folks, and He’s coming back for His Bride, just
like He said He would. He’s building the Huppah right now as we speak,
and when He’s done, the Father is going to give Him permission to go get
His Bride and when He does, He’s going to snatch her, the Church, and
abduct her away, just like in a Jewish Marriage Ceremony, just like He
promised He would.

Therefore again, the point is this. You better make sure you’re
ready to go. You better make sure you’re really a Bride of Christ. Please,
don’t be a foolish virgin who’s not prepared. Be a wise one, a real one,
before it’s too late. Receive the greatest Christmas present of all. The gift of
eternal life now!

To find the way to God, to understand the truth of God’s Word, and to received the gift of eternal life, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

“Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and
sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that
Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in
Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”