

Dec 7th 2008: The Christmas Question: John 3:16

At the present I am reading.....raises heaps of questions

Written from a Post modern viewpoint.....he encourages....to question.....many of the things we have taken as absolutes.....including the way we interpret the Bible

Such a read set me thinking about the questions.....should be asking about Christmas

Of course.....if you speak to a child.....the most impt Christmas Question for them

What will I get this Christmas?.....

For a Mum.....What will I cook?

For a husband.....What will I buy the wife?

• **For the seeker of truth**.....the major Christmas Questions revolve around.....

=what my English teacher called.....**The 3 W questions**

WHAT—WHO—WHY ????????

The what question

will be looked at again and again during this Christmas period

In Christian homes...churches....schools.....and in other more unexpected places

The songs we sing.....the talks we hear.....The Bible readings we turn to...the cards

will give age old answers to such questions as:-

- **What happened at that first Christmas?**
- **What did it achieve?**
- **What are the ongoing ramifications of it?**

Even some of the TV shows we especially choose to watch

Will emphasise that the WHAT of Christmas.....was not Santa

Or the excuse for over indulgence

But was the birth in Bethlehem....by a virgin....of the Saviour of the world

Howard(10)...writing a letter to God at Christmas wrote:→

"Dear God: How are you doing? Is heaven OK?

I just wanted you to know what Christmas means to me.

Christmas means a time of joy, peace on earth and rejoicing on the day your Son, Christ came down to Earth. That one night was the most holy night on Earth. The presents that I get every year are OK, but the greatest present you gave to the world was Jesus. Sincerely, Howard."

The WHO Question:

Will again be covered very clearly this Christmas...and rightly so

The proper understanding of WHO that baby born over 2,000.....really is
Is absolutely fundamental to our celebration of the season.

I have no real issue with Santa Clause.....or for that matter....the tooth fairy
 But I do get concerned.....that in children's minds.....**Same category**
 As imaginary characters that you believe in as children....but grow out of

The baby born in Bethlehem was....still is....The Son of God
And if a person does not believe that.....then whatever they may
celebrate...25th
It is not Christ---mas

It is this truth....more than anything else....that we proclaim as believers....Christmas
That our celebration of Christmas.....is first and foremost

An act of adoration.....An act of homage.....

A recognition of the birth of our King

HONOURING HIM TAKES PRECEDENCE

So whether the WHO question is:-

- **Who was this baby?**
- **Who sent Him?**
- **Who was His birth for?**

The answers are clearly given.....in most carols.....Most Christmas readings

Then there's that great sign outside our church

However....It's the Why question.....

that I sense is THE CHRISTMAS Question

WHY DID CHRISTMAS HAPPEN IN THE FIRST PLACE?

- **The obvious answer.....**and the one expressed in many of the carols
Is that every person is polluted by sin.....and the reason for Christmas
We ...needed a Saviour

YET in the case of Christmas.....the need.....was not the major motivating factor

You see→ The need is in us....**because** of our rebellion against God
It's due to our unwillingness to recognize God.....**To obey** Him as Lord

- **God had every right**...to ignore our need...TO see it as self inflicted
 And the coming judgment as justified

But He didn't.....**Instead** He made that first Christmas happen

John 3:16 is the answer to the WHY Christmas question

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,
 that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Its so simple.....So true.....So well understood by believers
Yet most carols we sing....don't mention it

God so loved the world.....
 And the world here is surely a reference to every human

*(I was reading a sermon.....God only loves those who receive Him.....And
 that the world here refers to the world God saw as coming in the
 future....Containing only those)*

But I cant accept that God only loves those who respond
 And as I look at the way 'world' is used.....I can't accept that the Bible teaches

- **God is love says John**.....That is His character.....His way of being
And He looks upon every person.....**He** looks upon you.....and He loves you
And when He sent His much loved Son.....that was the expression of perfect love

Yet He is also Light

Absolutely without sin or darkness.....and when sin remains in the equation
Judgment must fall.....**But that** does not negate His love

**When God the Son bore the sins.....there on the cross.....Taking the judgment of
God still loved Him**

But because of the sins.....**For a time** He could not lavish.....blessing of that

That's why anyone now....who finally exp God's judgment rather than fruit love
Chooses to do so.....

IT IS NOT THAT GOD DOESN'T LOVE THEM

- **That's the dreadful meaning behind John 3:17-18**

**For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,
but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned,
but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he
has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.**

It is this tremendous love.....for even the worst.....

This love that still treats us the same....even when we do things...think....

That we find so hard to comprehend

Our love is so imperfect

I know I love my wife.....but there are many times.....when

*(I read a story of a child psychologist who moved into a new
neighbourhood.....A box of Delights p 108)*

God's love never changes

The love He showed to the world...when He sent His Son.....**still remains the same**

- **That's the Love He calls us....to show to others**

For once we know the answer to the Why of Christmas

Once we have received it for ourselves

**Then God calls us.....to show it to others...Near and far...Known &
unknown...Friends , enemies, strangers, families**

What opportunities this Christmas....will you take...to do that?

