

PANTAI BAPTIST CHURCH
PETALING JAYA

A Christmas ePublication (2022)



ABOUT CHRISTMAS

CHARLES H. SPURGEON

1834-1892

The Lord himself will give you a sign.
Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and shall call his name Immanuel.

ISAIAH 7:14

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FOREWORD

As we celebrate Christmas
this year, it is important to
understand the historical context
of this celebration. Through the
pen and research of our
sister Sally Cheong we present
to you this brief write-up for
the edification of our church,
mainly looking through the lens
of C.H. Spurgeon,
the Prince of Preachers.

*May you all be blessed this
Christmas!*

ELDER
Bryan Lee

INTRODUCTION

C.H. Spurgeon had strong objections during the early part of his life against the celebration of the birth date of Jesus Christ on 25th December. He grew up with his grandfather who was a Puritan. *“I have no respect to the religious observance of the day.”* Spurgeon found no scriptural authority for observing the date as the birthday of the Saviour. The pagan links to Saturnalia, a feast dedicated to the Roman god Saturn during Christmas was another thing that irked the Puritans as the season was associated with gluttony and drunkenness.

Spurgeon remarked about the *“Popish origin”* of Christmas as Pope Julius 1 had institutionalised the date (25th December) as an ecclesiastical custom. The church in Rome began formally celebrating Christmas on 25th December in 336 (Britannica) when Emperor Constantine made Christianity the effective religion of the Empire.

When Spurgeon moved to London in 1854, his puritanical reservations about Christmas were confronted with a new emphasis – importance of family. Queen Victoria and her German husband, Albert, brought a new life to Christmas when The Illustrated London News published a picture of the royal family gathered around a Christmas tree. It popularised Christmas as a time for families to be united for the festive season.

Spurgeon later said, *“Though I have no respect to the religious observance of the day, yet I love it as a family institution.”* Spurgeon and his wife Susannah would visit orphans each Christmas Day when his health permitted him to do so. He led the children to remember generous benefactors who supplied funds for the orphanages, to be kind to their caretakers, and to give thanks to GOD for His provision. (Ray Rhodes, Jr.)

SPURGEON FELT THAT THE REAL IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTMAS WAS THAT IT MADE PEOPLE “THINK OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.”

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?

In his several Christmas sermons, Spurgeon shared how believers may celebrate Christmas in GOD glorifying ways by focusing on the birth of Jesus Christ. He urged his church to differentiate themselves from how the world operated during this time of the year.

“How absurd to think we could do it in the spirit of the world, with a Jack Frost clown, a deceptive worldly Santa Claus, and a mixed program of sacred truth with fun, deception and fiction.”
(Dec. 24, 1871).

Spurgeon warned that those who follow the customs of the world *“follow not the Bible but pagan ceremonies.”*

WAYS TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

1 As we think of the baby in the manger, “let us aspire after a fresh birth of the Saviour in our hearts. Let us go to Jesus with that youthful freshness and delight” which was manifested in us when we first looked at Him.

2 Praise Him like the Angels did in Bethlehem! Singing to shepherds! Sing of Jesus “descending that we might ascend, and wrapped in swaddling bands that we might be unwrapped of the grave-clothes of corruption.”

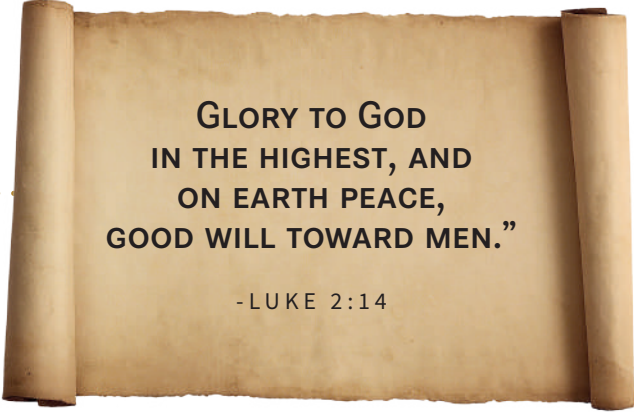
3 Remember the ministry of Christmas. Tell the shepherds of our time who are out in the fields working, toiling in the night. Lead them to the manger where they will worship Him.

4 “Clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and make glad the mourner. Remember, it is good will towards men....if you will do that, the poor will wish there were six Christmases in the year.”

5 Feast and be merry. ‘We have the angelic warrant for rejoicing because Christ is born.’
“You will feast, and you will rejoice, and endeavour to make your household glad as GOD has given you substance. Feasting is not a wrong thing, or otherwise Job would have forbidden it to his children. Job only feared that a wrong thing should be made out of a right thing, so he offered sacrifices” in case any of his children sinned against GOD while feasting.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS CAROL

C.H. SPURGEON

A scroll of aged parchment with a decorative dotted line on either side. The text on the scroll is centered and reads: "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN." Below the text is the citation "-LUKE 2:14".

GLORY TO GOD
IN THE HIGHEST, AND
ON EARTH PEACE,
GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.”

-LUKE 2:14

The angels sang something which men could understand. They were singing about Jesus who was born in the manger. They sang of Christ, and the salvation which He came into this world to work out. And what they said of this salvation was this: First, that it gave glory to GOD; secondly, that it gave peace to man; and, thirdly, that it was a token of GOD's good will towards the human race.

We must learn from this, that if salvation glorifies GOD, then, that doctrine, which glorifies man in salvation cannot be the gospel. There may be some preachers, that delight to preach a doctrine



that magnifies man; but in their gospel angels have no delight. The only glad tidings that made the angels sing, are those that put GOD first, GOD last, GOD midst, and GOD without end, in the salvation of His creatures. “*Glory to GOD in the highest,*” is the angels’ song.

When they had sung this, they sang what they had never sung before - for they added this stanza — “*on earth, peace.*” There had been no peace on earth since Adam fell, for peace is nowhere to be found but in Christ. This sacred peace between the pardoned soul and GOD the pardoner was what the angels sang when they said, “*peace on earth.*”

And, then, they wisely ended their song with a third note. They said, “*Good will to man.*” No greater proof of kindness between the Creator and

His subjects can possibly be afforded than when the Creator gives His only begotten Son to die. GOD has good will towards men, so good a will that He has said, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies but rather that he should turn to Me and live."

I wish everybody that keeps Christmas this year, would keep it as the angels kept it. Since the angels gave glory to GOD: let us do the same.

Make peace in your family. You have made a vow that you will never speak to your brother again. Go after him, fetch him in and give him your hand. Do not try to keep Christmas without keeping good will towards men. If we have snarled at everybody last year, this Christmas time we will strive to be kindly affectionate to others.

If we have lived all this year at enmity with GOD, I pray that by His Spirit He may this week give us peace with Him; and then indeed it will be the merriest Christmas we will ever have in all our lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for this Christmas season which reminds us of the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. He came down from Heaven to save us from judgement for our sins. We are so grateful for His sacrifice for by it we have been given eternal life and blessings.

May our spirit be always subject to the Divine Spirit: may our feebleness reveal the strength of the indwelling Spirit of GOD. Grant us to feel that we have power to overcome sin; that we have power to resist the lusts of the flesh, and to despise the pomp of the world, and the lust of the eyes (1 John 2:16).

Grant that our church be your loving and faithful flock. Protect us from all unrighteousness. Keep us holy as You are Holy. Help us to be obedient to all Your commands. Teach us to love Your Word and abide in Christ Jesus our Saviour and Lord.

For we ask all these in Jesus's Name,

Amen





Christmas
GREETINGS

Pantai Baptist Church
wishes all our
members and friends...

Merry
Christmas
2022!



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for the edification of church members and friends.