

Five Crazy Christmas Ideas:
God is With You
John 1:1,14

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
The Word became flesh and took up residence among us.*

Christmas as a holiday did not begin right after the birth of Jesus. It's not like Jesus was born and the next year, everyone celebrated Christmas in recognition of the birth of Jesus. The concept of Christmas as a remembrance of the birth of Jesus Christ came during the 300's AD when Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire. When the Church was free from persecution, the emperor declared Christmas to be a holiday. The term Christmas is derived from Christ's mass or the mass of Christ.

A secular Christmas is a holiday without the Biblical story of Jesus. I suggest that it's possible to enjoy a secular Christmas.

Notice the clear Biblical references in **Hark The Herald Angels Sing**:

*Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;
Hail, the incarnate Deity:
Pleased, as man, with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!*

That song captures the Biblical story of Jesus coming from heaven. The journey of Jesus from heaven to earth is what we call the ***incarnation***. This is a compound Latin word, *in* plus *flesh*. We would say, in the flesh. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, took on a human nature when He was born in Bethlehem.

Jesus is God Incarnate. That means, Jesus didn't get His start in Bethlehem. The eternal Son of God, without ceasing to be God, took on a fully human nature. Without abandoning anything of what it means to be God, Jesus took on all of what it means to be a human.

This is addition, not subtraction. Deity was not subtracted from Him. Humanity was added to Him.

This is so important for us to understand because with the incarnation we learn that Jesus is totally unique. The uniqueness of the person of Jesus Christ will help you to understand the uniqueness of the offer of salvation through Jesus Christ.

You will be presented time and time again with ideas that pushback against Jesus being the only way to salvation. It helps to understand that it's the uniqueness of Jesus Christ that drives the uniqueness of God's path to salvation and eternal life. People sometimes suggest that Christianity is narrow-minded and exclusive. I disagree. ***Christianity is unique because Jesus is unique.***

Jesus left heaven in order to be our Savior, (John 6:38). That's the Christmas event and this means all the joy and the hope and the community that you could ever long for can be found in and through the person of Jesus Christ.

Home Group Discussion Questions:

1. Is there anything that draws you to the Biblical Christmas story?
2. What do you think of when you hear the phrase “secular Christmas”?
3. Pastor Karl suggested that even among those who observe a “secular Christmas” there are people who want some things in the Biblical Christmas story to be true. What do you think some of those longings might be? (What do people hope to get at Christmas, excluding all forms of gifts?)
4. What is it that makes Christmas Biblical? What is it that makes Christianity unique? What is it that makes Jesus unique?
5. How might knowing that God is with you be helpful on a daily basis?