

# Roots in Ripon

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*Chuck Roots*

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## You Should Celebrate Christmas

I suspect you are asking yourself the question, challenging my titled statement above, "Why should I celebrate Christmas?"

Granted there are innumerable reasons why some folks choose not to celebrate Christmas. I will list a few to which you may add many more. "I don't believe in Santa Claus or Jesus." "It has become too commercialized." "Christmas is just the Christian religion's attempt to have a religious holiday to counter the ancient Roman celebration of Saturnalia with its riotousness and orgiastic behavior." And then there are those grumpy, curmudgeonly, Scroogelike characters who respond to a cheerful greeting of Merry Christmas with "Bah! Humbug!" However, that is not the focus of this article. Instead, this article is about why you should celebrate Christmas.

Man is religious by nature. What I mean by that is human beings function in such a way that they must and will find something or someone to worship; to focus their love and attention upon. We really can't help it. Our first objects of love and affection are our mothers and fathers. Because they shower us with nurturing and care we freely show them our pleasure with smiles, cooing, and a constant display of happiness. As growing children, we still want and need the attention of parents and their involvement in our lives. Parents who are loving and compassionate do more to open the eyes of their children to the possibility of accepting the belief in God than anything else. If that element is missing, the child will then search for something else to focus on. That can be a school teacher, a coach, a youth pastor, belonging to a gang, or, worst of all, becoming self-absorbed. There is no more pathetic individual than a person who becomes narcissistic. Other people are of no importance to this person. This person worships themselves above all else.

Man adheres to the principle of fairness. This value alone emerges practically from the moment we emerge from our mother's womb. We don't like being thrust into this new environment. I'd rather be back in my close, warm cocoon. And so it goes when they are hungry, or need a diaper change, or want to sleep, etc. Crying is their way of telling parents that they are falling down on the job. It's not fair the way they're being treated. Then comes the time they realize a sibling may get preferential treatment. When our girls were small, they would complain that the other one got a bigger slice of cake. I fixed that problem by having the older one cut two pieces of cake. Then the younger one got to pick which piece she wanted. It was hilarious watching them measure out the slices to make sure one didn't get one crumb more than the other. Throughout life we lean strongly toward this issue of fairness.

Man yearns for justice. Once again, this is something we humans long for. Life is so full of uncertainty and evil doing that deep within our soul there is the anguished cry demanding justice for the wrongs that have been done. We create

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more and more laws to push back against those who would disrupt our lives with bad behavior. In an attempt at fairness for everyone, we require those who do bad things to be held accountable. Whether it's being sent to our room, or being sent to the "Big House", some action is required to satisfy the need for justice. Even with a death penalty in place and the wrong-doer is executed, the egregiousness of their action is not satisfied even with their death. Ask any family who has had a loved one murdered, or violently assaulted. To assuage this need for justice, Texas has had a law on the books for a long time. It's called the "He needed killing" law. It was a defense for those who took the life of someone doing severe harm to another.

At this point you may be wondering what all this has to do with Christmas. Well, everything!

The focus and purpose of Christmas is God responding to these three basic concerns of man: 1) We will worship someone or something, 2) We demand fairness, and 3) We cry out for justice.

It is God who knows we have fallen well short of our potential as being created in his image and likeness. Sin has marred and distorted our perception of worship, fairness and justice.

It is this next part that staggers my thinking. God chose to correct this problem by becoming a man just like us, living amongst us, exposing himself to the dangers and sinful thoughts and actions of men. Any cursory reading of Jesus' life on earth in the Gospel books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John will clearly demonstrate that Jesus was no mere mortal. As God's son, he worshipped the only person or thing worthy of such a reverence. As God's son, he endured the unfairness of life as meted out by evil men, including his death on a cross. And as God's son, he promised there would be a day of reckoning when all wrongs would be made right. I don't know how that will be done, but God says he'll do it, and that's good enough for me.

So regardless of arguments against celebrating Christmas, this much I know. God loves you and me. He sent his son into the world to pay the price for our sins and man's fallen condition. And he's promised us that by placing our faith and trust in his, we will live forever with him forever, far removed from what we have experienced in this world.

So, I say, "Thank you, God, for sending us your Son!" This is why you should celebrate. This is why it is always a Merry Christmas!