



[Leader Note: To start this message, I showed “It’s The Most Wonderful Time” mini-movie from shiftworship.com - <https://shiftworship.com/product/its-the-most-wonderful-time/>]

Intro

How many of you ate way too much on Thanksgiving?

How many of you are STILL eating Thanksgiving leftovers?

How many of you never want to see turkey and dressing again in your life?

Is it weird to anyone else that it’s already December and Christmas is just right around the corner?

There are always so many different things going on during this time of the year. There are the Christmas parades, the school Christmas party, the youth Christmas party, the team Christmas party, and all kinds of other get-togethers. It seems like every group has to have a Christmas party! Then there is the program with the choir, and the band Christmas program, the dance recital, and all these different things. Then, you throw in all the Christmas shopping, and you have to have Christmas at grandma’s and grandpa’s. And then Christmas at the other grandparents’ house. Oh yeah, and Aunt Lucy wants to have a Christmas get-together with her ENTIRE side of the family because it will so incredibly fun seeing lots of aunts, uncles, and cousins that you never ever see (ok, maybe not). There is just so much going on, but it’s exciting, right?!

I mean, I get excited about the gifts. I get excited about the programs and musicals, and about the parties. I love when the weather gets cold, and you get to make hot chocolate and eat all the Christmas treats and finger foods. I can put away some sausage balls, let me just tell you!

All of these things are good, especially getting to catch up with family and friends that you might not have gotten to see all year. Gifts are good! It’s good getting to share a gift with someone you love. Don’t you feel great when you get to give someone you love a gift that you made or really put a lot of thought into? That’s one of my favorite things!

Sometimes, though, if we are not careful we can get caught up in all of the hype and all of the busyness around Christmastime, that we really don't take the time to stop and remember what the season is about. We hear the words "Jesus is the reason for the season," but sometimes we don't actually take the time to think about that.

With such busy schedules around the holidays, it's easy for us to make it all the way through December and through the Christmas season thinking, I have got to be here, we've got to go there, let's cook that, I can't wait to get this, we have this practice for that program, and so on. And then Christmas day comes and goes and we remember, oh yeah, Jesus is the reason for the season.

What does it actually mean though? What does it mean that "Jesus is the reason for the season?" The season is celebrating that Jesus was born, right? But why does it really matter that Jesus was born? What difference does it actually make and why do we need to take time and celebrate the birth of Jesus?

That's what I want to talk about today!

The typical story of Jesus' birth that you will hear around Christmas time comes from the gospel of Luke, chapter two, where we read about how Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem for the census. And we read about how they couldn't find anywhere to stay and so they ended up sleeping in a stable, and Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger after He was born. Then, we hear about the shepherds and wise men who came to visit Jesus and brought him gifts. You all know the story!

But how many of you knew that Jesus' birth was actually prophesied 600 years before he was born? That's pretty cool, right? We can read in Scripture where someone spoke about Jesus' birth 600 HUNDRED years before He was actually born! Think about that. That's is a long time! And not only was His birth written about, but it was also written about how it would take place!

In **Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)** it says

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

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