

Benefits of Christmas

On Saturday of this week, many people in this country and around the world will celebrate Christmas. Many will be traveling to visit their families. They will exchange gifts and enjoy the time together. Some do this as a celebration of the birth of Jesus; others do not. While this holiday may have begun as a religious holiday, it has become one of the most secular holidays that we have on our calendar.

As we enter into this holiday, it is important to understand that this is not the time of year in which Jesus was born. While we are not told when He was born, we are given some clues that lead us to believe that it was not during the winter. The reason for this is that the shepherds were in the field with the sheep (*Lk. 2:8*), which they would not have done in the winter. Most scholars believe that He was born during spring, around April. Even though we know that this is not the time of year in which Jesus was born, we can enjoy the benefits of this holiday.

First, we can use this time to enjoy the extra time with our families. Most companies give their employees time off during the holiday season. We can use this time to spend with our family, many of which we do not see during the year. We have the opportunity to exchange gifts and enjoy the time together.

Second, we can use this season to teach others about Jesus. While we know that Jesus was not born during this time of year, we do know that others will be thinking about Him during this season. This gives us a great opportunity to teach others about His birth. But more than that, it gives us an opportunity to teach about His death and what it means to us today. Because others will be thinking about Jesus during this time, they will be more receptive to hearing the gospel of Christ.

Third, we can use this time to remember the purpose of the birth of Christ. His birth was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Isaiah says, "*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel*" (*Is. 7:14*). This was in Matthew fulfilled when Jesus was born to Mary (*Mt. 1:18-25*).

During this time when many are thinking about the birth of Christ, we cannot forget the purpose of His life. From the beginning of His life, it was told that He would be our Savior. "*And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins*" (*Mt. 1:21*). His purpose was to save us. Again, Jesus says that His purpose is "*to seek and to save that which was lost*" (*Lk. 19:10*). May we always remember that purpose, and work to tell others about it.