

Personal/Small Group Study

Week of December 10, 2023 A.D.

A Cradle, A Cross, and A Crown

When we celebrate Christmas in America, the common tendency is to focus on the birth of Jesus in a manger. That tendency is to be expected in our now pagan culture. However, as the church of Jesus Christ, we are to solemnly remember that the baby became a man, died on a cross for our sins, and is our present and eternal King. In this study, we will reflect upon the larger mission of Christ as we discuss the cradle (his humanity), the cross (his death for our sins), and the crown (his lordship and deity) of Jesus as taught in the Holy Scriptures.

(Note: For every question which appears in this study, always give the reasoning and/or the explanation for each of your answers.)

Read Isaiah 9:2; 6-7 & Luke 2:11-12

1. Is Jesus the "child" who is mentioned in Isaiah 9:6? Did Jesus exist before he was born in Bethlehem? If so, where was Jesus and what was Jesus like before his birth?

Read John 3:16-18

2. Is Jesus the "son" who is mentioned in Isaiah 9:6? Why does Isaiah make a distinction by stating that a child is "born" to us and that a son is "given" to us?

Read Romans 5:14, 17-19

3. Who is the sinless man of obedience who is mentioned in verse 19? Why is it essential that human salvation must come through the obedience of a human (instead of God simply declaring that all humans are forgiven)?

Read Matthew 1:20-23

4. Please analyze, critique, and discuss this statement: "Because Jesus is God, he could live as a human without committing sin. Because Jesus was human, he was capable of committing sin. Because Jesus did not sin, Jesus is uniquely qualified to pay in full (satisfy) the sin-debt of all of mankind."

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-5; 16-17

5. Please state the essential elements of the gospel by which a person receives the gift of eternal life. Why is each element necessary?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:17-18

6. What is the power of “the cross of Christ”? What is “the message of the cross”? Why is that message “foolishness” to those who are perishing?
7. Why do people choose not to receive (and thereby reject the offer to receive) eternal life through faith in Jesus? Would more people receive eternal life through faith in Christ if every believer (both individually and collectively as the church) did a better job of warning everybody about the reality of hell and eternal torment for all people who do not acknowledge Christ as their Savior and Lord?
8. Do non-Christians observe and/or celebrate the holiday which is called Christmas? If so, how? If so, why?
9. Do Christians observe and/or celebrate the holiday which is called Christmas? If so, how? If so, why?

Read Matthew 13:36-43

10. Please analyze, critique, and discuss this statement: “The kingdom of Christ is already in existence and the citizenship of the kingdom of Christ continues to grow in numbers every day.”
11. In your opinion, which of the following should be our primary focus during the celebration of the Christmas holiday: (a) the cradle of Christ; (b) the cross of Christ; or, (c) the crown of Christ?
12. Make a list of some of the things that Americans do in order to prepare for and celebrate Christmas day. In your opinion, (a) which of those actions should be eliminated from the list and why? (b) what actions should be added to the list and why?

Consider: The Christmas Advent season is a time for Christians to remember, reflect upon, and celebrate the salvation and new life which we enjoy because of the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ. “You think about that.” Amen