

Doing Church God's Way!

(PART 1)

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Matthew 1:18-25

Hebrews 13:7-17

Telling the Real Christmas Story

- Can you tell the REAL Christmas story?
- Has YOUR Christmas story been so watered down that it is no real BIG deal? – God coming to earth as a man ought to be a story that is repeated to every generation with GREAT AWE. (1 Timothy 3:16)
- Does your Christmas story include words like ETERNITY, ELECTION, SOVEREIGNTY, INCARNATION, PROVIDENCE, SIN, BLOOD, DEATH, SUBSTITUTION, SURETY, PROPITIATION, REDEMPTION, SANCTIFICATION, JUSTIFICATION, FORGIVENESS, PRESERVATION, RESURRECTION, ETERNAL SECURITY, GLORIFICATION, etc.?
- When you tell your Christmas story are you an important part of it? Are you in the Christmas story? Can you use the Christmas story in witnessing to your family, friends, and colleagues?

Christ Came the First Time to Save HIS People (Matt 1:21)

- (Genesis 3:16) God's first promise to send a Messiah, a Saviour.
- (Luke 2:1-11; Galatians 4:4) In the fullness of time (some 4,000 years after His promise) God did send HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON - the Christ (Messiah).
- (Matthew 1:21) Christ did not come to start a religion. He came to save His people from their sins.
- Christ did not come to make salvation possible. He came to save His people from their sins.
- Christ did not come primarily to save people from hell. He came to save His people for their sins - their sinful lives.
- Christ did not come to make people church-goers. He came to transform sinners and rebels against God into obedient creatures that adore, love, obey, worship, and serve Him. (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 John 2:29-3:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

Watching and Praying for His Second Advent (1 Thessalonians 4:1-5:11)

- CHRIST CAME! IT IS NOW HISTORY!
- No where in Scripture are we told to celebrate His first coming.
- Christmas is a man-made holiday - not a God-given feast!
- However, there is sufficient evidence that Christ did come during the feast of Tabernacles.



- We are commanded to learn from His first coming.
- We ARE commanded to WATCH EAGERLY DAILY for His promised SECOND coming.



God's Gift to His Church (Ephesians 4:11-16)

- God gives leaders to HIS Churches.
- God determines the qualifications for His leaders for HIS Churches.
- (Ephesians 4:11-12) God gives leaders to HIS Churches . . .
 - ① FOR the **equipping** of the **saints** (all of them) . . .
 - ② FOR the **work** of **ministry** . . .
 - ③ FOR **edifying** of the WHOLE BODY.
- The **work** of the leaders goes **until** . . .
 - ① ALL come to the **unity** of **the** faith . . .
 - ② AND the **knowledge** of the Son of God . . .
 - ③ TO a **perfect** man . . .
 - ④ TO the **measure** of the stature of the **fullness of Christ** . . .
 - ⑤ THAT we (ALL of US) should no longer be children . . .
 - ⑥ tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of **doctrine** . . .
 - ⑦ BY the **trickery** of men, in **cunning craftiness** of **deceitful plotting** . . .
 - ⑧ BUT, speaking **the** TRUTH in love . . .
 - ⑨ THAT we may grow up in ALL THINGS into Him who is the HEAD.
- ★ God gives leaders to HIS Churches so that the WHOLE BODY GROWS and EDIFIES itself in love. (Ephesians 4:16)
- As God's gifts to HIS Churches with specific responsibilities leaders **must** take their job absolutely seriously. One does not achieve the goals set by God above by "playing church"!
- Church members must be aware of why God gives them leaders and then do their part (each and every one of them) so that the WHOLE BODY can achieve God's purpose for them.

Responsibilities of Leaders (1 Thessalonians 5:12)

① WORK

- κοπιᾶω kopiao {kop-ee-ah'-o} – to grow weary, tired, exhausted.
 - Leaders are to grow tired **in the work** not of their work.
 - Leaders **serve** their congregations as Christ came to **serve**. (Mark 10:45) – Servants WORK.
 - Leaders labor for God's name sake. (Revelation 2:3)
 - Leaders work because of the GRACE they have received. (1 Corinthians 15:10)

- Leaders work hard because they care about the SOULS of those whom they lead.
- Leaders are to LABOR (work hard) in the WORD and DOCTRINE. (1 Timothy 5:17)
- Leaders, as shepherds, are to FEED, CARE, and PROTECT their flocks. (1 Peter 5:2)

② LEAD

- Church leaders lead *by example*. (1 Peter 5:3; Philip. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7; **1 Cor. 11:1**; 4:16)
- Church leaders are NOT like worldly leaders. (Mark 10:42)
 - Church leaders DO NOT LORD OVER! (1 Peter 5:3)
 - Church leaders are **slaves** of Christ and His Body. (Mark 10:43-44; Matthew 20:28)
- Church leaders give their ALL - they give their lives. (1 John 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:8)
- Church leaders lead, not for money. (1 Peter 5:2)
- Church leaders lead eagerly and enthusiastically. (1 Peter 5:2)
- Church leaders FOLLOW God. (Ephesians 5:1; Mark 10:45)
- Church leaders lead by *shepherding* as they follow the Chief Shepherd.

③ WARN

- $\nu\omicron\upsilon\theta\epsilon\tau\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ noutheteo {noo-thet-eh'-o} – literally - “to put into one’s mind”
 - It is used in the sense that we WARN with a biblical understanding.
 - It means more than just to correct.
 - Again church leaders are concerned with people’s soul and where they will spend eternity.
- Leaders are **commissioned** by God to **preach** (*kerusoo*) the whole Word of God.
 - ★ Leaders are not allowed to share their opinions. They must be **workman rightly dividing** the Word of God. (2 Tim 2:15)
 - ☆ Leaders **work** to meet the approval of God which is higher than any human standard.
 - ☆ Leaders know that they will have to answer to God for their work. (Hebrews 13:17)
- Leaders are to CONVINCe, REBUKE, WARN, INSTRUCT, and ADMONISH with the WORD. (2 Timothy 4:1-4; Luke 9:60; Colossians 1:28)
- (2 Timothy 3:16-17) Leaders are to use only the Word of God since it ALONE is PROFITABLE for:
 - ① DOCTRINE: telling us what is RIGHT.
 - ② REPROOF: telling us what is NOT right.
 - ③ CORRECTION: telling us HOW to get right.
 - ④ INSTRUCTION: telling us how to STAY right.
 - ⑤ EQUIPPING: the saints in the work of ministry.

- Leaders are to speak with ALL AUTHORITY since whatever he preaches/teaches is, “**Thus says the LORD . . .**”. (Titus 2:15)

Responsibilities of the Congregation to Leaders (1 Thess 5:13)

① Know Your Leaders (those who WORK, LEAD, and WARN)

- Congregations are to “acknowledge, recognize, intimately know” their leaders.
 - They must acknowledge that pastors, leaders, and teachers are God’s gifts to His church. (Ephesians 4:11)
- The congregation must DISCERN that their leaders are men of God and not of Satan. (Acts 20:28-29; Matthew 7:15; 24:4-5, 11, 24-25; 1 John 4:1; Colossians 2:8; 2 Corinthians 11:13-14)
- If a congregation is deceived it is their own fault. Christ and His Word has warned us! (Matt 7:15; 24:4-5, 11, 24; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1; Jude 3)

② Highly Esteem Them in Love

- “esteem” means to respect; “highly” means “super-abundantly.”
- “in love”
 - (✚) We are to *agape* (strongest word for love) each other.
 - Helping, expressing thankfulness, appreciation, providing for them.
 - (⚒) We are not to gossip, slander, criticize them to others, ignoring their teachings.
- “because of their work”
 - We are to highly esteem our leaders *for their work*.
 - ★ Let the elders *who rule well* be counted worthy of double honor, especially those *who labor* (work hard at; work to exhaustion, being tired, etc.) **in the word and doctrine**. (1 Timothy 5:17)

③ Submit Joyfully to Them

- “be at peace among yourselves”
 - Peace comes from submitting to the Word of God and living our lives in accordance with it.
 - Those, God-appointed, God-given, leaders who labour to serve in the preaching and teaching the Word and doctrine should be followed **as they follow the Lord**. (1 Cor 11:1; Hebrews 13:7)
- (Hebrews 13:17) Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.