

Why the world loves Christmas

By bro Ben Gad

The popular Christmas song 'Mary's Child' by 'Boney M' made me think: Why is it that the world so loves Christmas?

The answer is in the words of the song; take a closer look: "Mary's boy child, Jesus Christ, was born on Christmas day..." And then: "...hark now, hear the angels sing... MAN CAN LIVE FOR EVER AND NEVER DIE!"

This is the theology mankind loves: the promise of everlasting life, of a God that loves mankind to the point of sending His only Son to pay for their sins.

"This," said a Reverend this morning about John 3:16, "is the message of Christmas!"

In a short religious message on the Afrikaans RSG radio station called 'Sielsgedagte' ('Thought for the soul'), the Reverend told of how 93 million people (mostly Americans) in a 24-hour period Googled 'John 3:16' in response to a message painted on the face of a football hero. The fact that so many did not know this well-known Bible verse shows the depravity among a nation claiming to be 80%+ Christian, but that is beside the point.

If we look at only this verse, then Boney M's theology cannot be faulted:

John 3:16: *"God loved the world this way: He gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life."* (God's Word version)

But what does John 3:19 say? What is the context of John 3:1-19?

John 3:19: *"This is why people are condemned: The light came into the world. Yet, people loved the dark rather than the light because their actions were evil."*

Wow! Now won't that spoil any Christmas message?

Of course! This is why the post-modern Church (in general) had to stop preaching about sin, about 'evil actions,' about condemnation and hell.

Because the definition of 'sin' and of 'evil actions' can only be found in the Old Testament and in particular in the writings of Moses called 'Torah' in Hebrew, which is translated 'Law' and was rejected by the Church as 'legalism' which does not fit into the **John 3:16 Theology, the Christmas theology.**

This is the Christmas theology teaching that 'MAN CAN LIVE AND NEVER DIE'! This is a theology the Church hoped would prevent the huge exit from its pews. But what is the truth? John 3:16 says that they '**who believes in Him**' – the Son.

Simply saying “I believe Jesus was a real historic person,” or even saying, “I believe Jesus is the Son of God, He was the Christ,” will however not make the grade. Why? Because even the demons acknowledge and know who Jesus is, but it does not change their destiny. Why? Because to BELIEVE means to OBEY and DO. (See James 2:19-20)ⁱ

Back to John 3. For a start, John 3 is not about limitless grace for sinners, it’s all about the requirement of becoming born again. Not baptized, not a Church member, but about a required spiritual birth.

The Son is Yeshua (Jesus), which in Hebrew means ‘salvation.’ John 1:1 says He is the WORD that became flesh. It is this WORD that specifies the requirements for salvation. It is this WORD that defines what is evil and what is an abomination as per the opinion of God and not man. It is the Word that eventually will CONDEMN sinners to eternal death!

John 3:36: *“He who believes on the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him.”*

John 5:28-29: *“Do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have practiced evil to the resurrection of condemnation.”*

In an ‘intense Church debate’ ‘raging’ in South Africa, theologians argue about issues such as ‘gays’. “This is a test about love. Love is the core of the Gospel,” says the Moderator of a Church. Yes, this we have to acknowledge, truly is the Christmas Gospel, but it’s not the Gospel calling the world to repentance, to change away from evil.

This Christmas Gospel is not truth, it does not condemn and it does not convert, but it does make the world feel hopeful and good, it talks of love in a way the world likes to hear.

Which is why the world loves Christmas.

Selah?!

ⁱ James 2:19-20: “You believe that there is one God, you do well; even the demons believe and tremble. But will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”