

# *Christmas 2018*

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## *“The War on CHRIST-mas”*

(12/25/18)

Well, after taking a few years off—I see that the war on Christmas was back this year with a vengeance.

I see the “Grinches” were back that want to do away with Christmas—or at least downplay it to the point that it is no longer recognizable.

Many retailers once again this Christmas season instructed their employees to no longer say *“Merry Christmas”* but instead to say something generic like *“Happy Holidays”* or *“Seasons Greetings.”*

Many companies didn't allow their employees to put up a Manger or to even have a small one displayed on their desk again this year.

Many employers instructed their employees that they couldn't give one another Christmas cards containing any “religious” themes as they might be offensive to some.

Of course, one of the main areas where we see this anti-Christmas political correctness being promoted is in public schools across our nation.

When I was in school as a kid it was always called *“Christmas break”* now it's called *“Winter break”*.

One author said—

*“When I was a child in the 1950s, the magic of Christmas was promoted in the schools. We sang Christmas carols in the classroom. There were cutouts of the Nativity scene on the bulletin board, along with the smiling, chubby face of Santa and Rudolph. We were all acutely aware that Christmas was magic.*

*Fast forward to the present day, and there is a phobia surrounding Christmas that has turned it into fodder for the politically correct culture wars.*

*In Massachusetts, a fourth-grade class was asked to list 25 things that reminded them of Christmas. When one young student asked if she could include “Jesus,” her teacher replied that she could get fired if Christmas’ namesake appeared on the list.*

*In Connecticut, teachers were instructed to change the wording of the classic poem “’Twas the Night Before Christmas” to “’Twas the Night Before a Holiday.”*

Many school districts have prohibited Christmas carols from being sung during school festivities.

I read a story, a few years ago, about an elementary school in eastern Massachusetts where the children were informed that they could not sing songs with any religious references in them.

They also could not wear Santa hats or even elf hats with red in them—they had to be white.

Christmas trees had to be referred to as *“magical trees.”*

And so, when one parent walked into their child’s class while they were singing, instead of the class singing *“we wish you a merry Christmas”* they were singing *“we wish you a swinging holiday”*.

An elementary school principal sent out a memo at the beginning of the Christmas season this year with guidelines as to what would be considered appropriate for classroom decorations and assignments during the holiday season.

Teachers were reportedly told that *sledding* and *scarves*, the Frozen character *Olaf*, and other *generic* winter-themed items were acceptable—candy canes, however, were not.

According to the principal's logic—candy canes form the letter “J,” standing for “Jesus” and therefore made the principle's ‘forbidden list’.

The Hallmark channel was in full ‘Christmas mode’ this year—starting 5 days before Halloween with their “*Countdown to Christmas*” movie line-up.

However, even the uber family-friendly Hallmark Christmas movies came under fire by progressives at the ultra-liberal *Salon.com* who called these benign feel-good Christmas shows—“*horror films in disguise*”.

One *Salon.com* writer snarked, “*Welcome to Christmas in Hallmark Town where romantic fates are sealed through gaslighting, sabotage and torture.*”—TORTURE!?!—SERIOIUSLY?!!

Maybe you heard that numerous radio stations across the country refused to play the well-known 1944 classic “*Baby It's Cold Outside*” this Christmas season.

So, why were progressives so up in arms about this vintage, classic tune, you ask?

The Wall Street Journal explained that:

*“Some radio stations refuse to play the Christmas classic over concerns its lyrics encourage the sexual assault of women”.*

In fact, the Urban Dictionary defines “*Baby, it's Cold Outside*” as a “Christmas Date Rape Song.”

Also, on the endangered species Christmas list this year were such songs as “*Deck the Halls*” (it supposedly promotes “gay” apparel), “*Santa Baby*” (it has been denounced for “slut shaming”), and “*White Christmas*” (perceived as being racist).

One publishing company even re-issued their own redacted version of Clement Moore's famous poem “*'Twas the night before Christmas.*”

They said the poem in its original form promoted an unhealthy lifestyle and so in an effort to be more health conscious—the company edited out Moore’s mention of Santa smoking a pipe (“The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth, / And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath.”)

Not even the beloved Christmas classic *‘Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer’* escaped the liberal “*Christmas derangement syndrome*” this year as the liberals at the Huffington Post weighed in on the Christmas classic calling it, *‘seriously problematic’*.

They went on to say in a video clip on their website (now deleted)— “*Yearly reminder that #Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is a parable on racism & homophobia w/ Santa as a bigoted exploitative [expletive].*”

Even the Salvation Army hasn't been immune from the war on Christmas.

I heard the story several years ago about a Salvation Army worker who was informed by a police officer that a recently passed local noise ordinance would prevent her from ringing her bells to invite contributions.

She was polite and apologetic that she had “broken” the law—however she was determined not to give up too quickly and so she came up with an idea.

The next day she was back in front of the store doing a brisker business than ever... as she waved one sign and then another in the air.

The one sign read "*ding*" and the other read "*dong*."

Which is kind of fitting because the world is full of "*ding dongs*" who are doing all they can to secularize Christmas—to the point where there will be no trace of Christianity left in Christmas when they get finished.

But even more to the point—the war on Christmas is really a war on Christ Himself—Who is the *"reason for the season"*.

One of the groups that leads the charge every year in the war against Christmas (and Christ) is a group called the *American Atheists* who spent \$20,000 to put up a billboard in New Jersey.

The large billboard on Route 495 near the Lincoln Tunnel depicted a silhouette of the Three Wise Men approaching a manger alongside the words: *"You KNOW it's a Myth. This Season, Celebrate REASON!"*

Now, while atheists want to *remove* Christ from Christmas and celebrate a *"generic, non-specific winter holiday"*—many others have simply gotten so busy with the season they don't have *time* for the Savior or have *forgotten* Him altogether.

It reminds me of the mother with her little girl out Christmas shopping who passed by a beautiful Nativity Scene in a department store window.

Catching a glimpse of the beautiful scene the child grabbed her mother's hand and exclaimed, *"Mama! Mama! Please let me stop for a minute to look at Jesus!"*—but the mother quickly pulled the little girl away and said, *"We don't have time for that, it's Christmas!"*

I have a cousin who works at a large grocery store in the area. Several years ago she told me that, while she was working one day near Christmas, she saw a piece of paper lying on the floor.

When she picked it up and looked at it—she discovered it was a Christmas 'to do' list someone had dropped...(finish)

Pastor and Evangelist Greg Laurie said,

*"A friend of mine told me about his young son who prayed, "Lord, thank you for sending your only FORGOTTEN Son, Jesus." He meant to say "begotten," of course, but "forgotten" may be more accurate for many today!"*

Of course, the war on Christmas isn't new—it goes all the way back to the first Christmas and to a Judean king known as Herod and Great.

History records that Herod the Great was extremely paranoid of his power being taken away from him—which led him to murder several in his own family including his first wife and three of his sons who he suspected might be plotting to overthrow him.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem during the reign of Herod the Great.

When the wise men came to Jerusalem 12 to 18 months after the birth of Christ asking, "*Where is he that is born King of the Jews?*"—this aroused Herod's paranoia.

According to Matthew's account, Herod tried to eliminate Jesus by having all the male children two years old and under in the Bethlehem region put to death (Matt 2:13-16).

But God warned Joseph in a dream to take the Christ-child and flee to Egypt—there they hid safely until Herod died (Matt 2:13-15).

Now, we all know that God would NEVER have allowed Herod to be successful in killing the Christ-Child—but let's imagine, just for a minute, that he *had* succeeded.

Let's imagine what the world would have been like if Jesus had been eliminated as a baby—or even if He had never been born at all.

In an article written by the late Dr. D. James Kennedy in the December issue of Focus on the Family 2001—it began:

*"I want to live again! God, I want to live again!" George Bailey cried as he stood on a snow-covered iron bridge, the dark swirling river below. With help from Angel Second Class Clarence Oddbody, George had just discovered, to his horror, what life would be like had he never been born.*

*Anyone who has watched the Christmas film classic 'It's a Wonderful Life' knows Bedford Falls had become Pottersville. Its main street a red-light district with loud music and garish, flesh-peddling neon signs—a transformation from Currier and Ives to Sodom and Gomorrah—all because George Bailey had never been born.*

*One person can make an enormous difference in the lives of others—in a community or an entire culture. But what if Jesus had never been born? What difference would it have made in history or in our daily lives if a Bethlehem stable had not served as a makeshift delivery room 2000 years ago?*

*A great deal!*

*Jesus, the greatest man who ever lived, has changed virtually every aspect of human life—and most people don't know it. The greatest tragedy of the Christmas holiday each year is not so much its commercialization, but its trivialization. People have forgotten Him to whom they owe so very much...*

He goes on to say--

*"Much of what we take for granted finds its roots in Christ and His teachings. And yet Christianity is ridiculed as an impediment to progress, a bane, and remains today the one safe target of contempt and prejudice. And while the church has strayed badly at times from Christ's teaching—for example, during the Crusades, the Inquisition and the blight of anti-Semitism—the overwhelming impact of Christ on earth has been for good..."*

He then lists 5 areas of human society that Jesus Christ has had a profound influence upon:

1. Respect for children and life;
2. The status of women;
3. The family;
4. Science and
5. Education.

## **I. Respect for Children and Life**

In ancient Greece and Rome children weren't looked upon as they are today since Jesus was born—back then abortion was rampant, and abandonment of infants was commonplace.

Many sickly or unwanted babies were often taken out into the forest to be left to starve, die from exposure or to be eaten by wild animals.

Many were left in the coliseums at night for others to take and raise for prostitution, sold into slavery or for their own perverted pleasures.

Then Jesus came, born of a virgin as the *baby* of Bethlehem, not disdaining His lowly birth but allowing it to be celebrated by the Angels that first Christmas morning as they announced it with great joy to the shepherds who were tending their flocks.

And since that time, because of Jesus' care for the poor and infirmed and because of His love for children Christians have cherished life—even the life of the unborn as sacred.

In ancient Rome, for example, Christians saved many abandoned babies and brought them up in the Christian faith.

Other believers started children's homes and nurseries and eventually founded orphanages and hospitals all in the name of Christ, based on His elevated view of life.

This became the foundation for Western civilization's ethic of human life—although today it has come under sever attack by the proponents of abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia.

## **II. The Status of Women**

Women have also benefited tremendously from the teachings and influence of Jesus Christ.

In ancient cultures the wife was nothing more than the property of her husband.

In India, China, Rome and Greece, men believed that women were not able or competent to be independent.

Prior to Christian influences in India, when a husband died his wife was expected, whether voluntarily or by force to lay on her dead husband's funeral pyre and be burned alive, joining him in death.

These practices in India ended in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century through Christian missionary intervention with the British authorities.

But in the ancient world a woman had no rights, she was chattel—if she even made it to adulthood at all since female infanticide was common.

Charles Spurgeon told of a Hindu woman who said to a missionary,  
*“Surely your Bible was written by a woman.” “Why?” he said. “Because it says so many kind things for women. Our pundits (teachers) never refer to us but in reproach.”*

D. James Kennedy—  
*“How ironic that feminists today do not give any credit to Christ; in fact, they say Christianity has oppressed women. In reality, Christianity has elevated women enormously. Had Jesus never come, Gloria Steinem may not have lived more than a few weeks.”*

### **III. The Family**

As Christianity grew and its influence spread—it introduced family values to a world polluted with sexual immorality.

In A.D. 125, Aristides, an Athenian philosopher, wrote a defense of the Christian faith to Emperor Hadrian.

Regarding Christian morality and its relationship to sexual matters he said,  
*“They do not commit adultery or immorality...Their wives, O king are as pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest. Their men abstain from all unlawful sexual contact and from impurity, in the hopes of recompense that is to come in another world.”*

Christianity has helped preserve the family as the basic unit of society—it has protected millions of people from sexually transmitted diseases because of its teachings on monogamy and sexual purity.

## IV. Science

Modern science is also a result of the influence of Christ and Christianity on the world.

The late Francis Schaeffer points out in his book *How Then Shall We Live?*—that both Alfred North Whitehead and American physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer stressed that modern science was born out of the Christian worldview.

Whitehead, a mathematician and philosopher, said that Christianity gave birth to science because of—“*the medieval insistence on the rationality of God.*”

Some of the greatest pioneers of science were Christians:

- Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) coined the phrase “*thinking God’s thoughts after Him*” for his study of nature.
- Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) not only made innovations in mathematics and probability science and helped pave the way for the computer—but was also a devout Christian.
- And Isaac Newton (1642-1727) who also professed faith in Christ said, “*This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.*”

## V. Education

Finally, education for the masses has its origin in Christianity.

The roots of education for the masses go back to the Reformation.

The Reformers believed that the only way the Protestant Reformation would hold would be if lay people could read the Bible for themselves—Jesus Himself encouraged learning.

As a boy He was an avid *student* of God's Word (as His encounter with the doctors of the Law in the Temple at age 12 demonstrates) and as an adult He was a tremendous *teacher* of God's Word.

The greatest universities in America were started by Christians for Christian purposes and for the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Most of the first 123 colleges and universities in the United States have Christian origins.

For example—engraved in stone by the entrance of Harvard are these words,

*“After God had carried us safe to New England and wee had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, rear'd convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civill government: One of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust.”*

The effect that the birth of Jesus Christ has had on this world is incomprehensible.

Had Jesus never been born—the world would be a very different place than it is today.

Let's personalize this—it doesn't matter if Jesus has come into *the* world—if you haven't invited Him to come into *your* world.

While it's true that the coming of Jesus into the world has changed the course of human history—without you inviting Him to come into your heart He won't be able to change the course of your life personally!

Again, had Jesus never been born, man would still remain in the darkness of sin and ignorance—and the world would be a very different place than it is today.

He is the Light of the world—the true Light that coming into the world has given light to every man and woman (the life-giving, life-changing light of God’s truth)—and it all began that first Christmas morning 2000 years ago.

However, the most important thing to understand about all of this is that—yes, Jesus changed the world, but He changed it—*one life at a time!*

Look, once again—it really doesn’t mean much that Jesus Christ has changed *the* world if He hasn’t changed *your* world!

Let me end by asking—if you haven’t received Jesus into your heart to be your King—*what are you waiting for? What are you afraid of?* (don’t be like King Herod...explain)

And if you’re a Christian here this morning, and you’re having a hard time letting go so that Jesus can have complete control of your life—what are *you* afraid of?!

We Christians are not afraid to trust Jesus with our eternity—so then why are so many scared to trust Him to lead their lives right now?!—how foolish is that!?

**"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14)**—a devotional by Phil Ballmaier Jr—

*“Glad tidings... The ancient world during the time of Christ knew anything, but true peace. All of the region surrounding Bethlehem was under a false or forced peace of the Roman Empire. It was a tyrannical rule which disguised itself under the cloak of goodwill. Yet something was gloriously different on this night—a true King would be born to Israel, and His peace would be a true and everlasting peace.*

*Fast forward more than two-thousand years, and not much has changed. Man is still looking for true and lasting peace—but this is a peace which must come down from above. Jesus Christ came, and brought to the world the only peace which really matters—true peace with God.*

*Poor soul, have you been striving against God in vain? If so, then look to Him, because your redemption draws near.*

*Father, only You bring lasting and true peace. I pray for anyone who reads this that has been striving against You... That You would provide them with true and lasting peace. I pray these things in Jesus name, Amen.”*

May the Prince of Peace find room in the “inn of your heart” this Christmas.

And then may His supernatural peace that surpasses all human comprehension fill your heart and mind—and every area of your life this new year—in Jesus’ precious name, amen.

*Merry Christmas!*