

## **The gift that keeps on giving**

The world has become caught up in Santa and reindeer, trees and decorations, presents and food, family and friends, holidays and fun. And all these are good things. It's wonderful to celebrate with family and friends and to enjoy each other's company. But Christmas is about so much more than this.

Christmas is all about God reaching down to us, out of his great love and mercy to save us through Jesus.

We see this promised throughout the Old Testament and then revealed in the New Testament.

The whole biblical narrative gives us God's blueprint for salvation.

So, from this perspective Christmas can be seen to be not just one event that we celebrate each year, – even though physically it is. But from a spiritual point of view it isn't, because when we receive Jesus into our hearts as Saviour – Christ is born afresh into the stable of our hearts – and this is the point of Christmas.

The truth of the Gospel is that through Jesus, God stepped into our messy world to save us and set us free. God didn't try to just love us from a distance. He didn't encourage us to clean ourselves up or command us to try harder and live a better life.

By sending Jesus, God entered into the mess of life for us. Jesus did for us what we couldn't do for ourselves - and that was giving us a way to be put right with God.

This means that when we celebrate the Babe of Bethlehem, we do so knowing that he became the Saviour of the world and we give thanks that it is only because of Jesus, we are now part of God's family.

So, Christmas is not just a sweet story about a little baby born in a stable – it is the center piece in God's plan of salvation because it is when God entered our world in Jesus, with the one task of him becoming our Saviour.

Jesus is Immanuel. God with us.

He is the Gift that keeps on giving.