

SIGNS
OF
CHRISTMAS

7 Symbols of the Season and the
Powerful Truth Behind Them

WITH **BILLY GRAHAM**

You can feel it in the air this time of year. Signs of Christmas are everywhere—from nativity scenes and twinkling lights to songs promising peace and joy. But have you ever wondered about the meaning behind all those symbols?

Sometimes it just takes a deeper look. Billy Graham's wife, Ruth Bell Graham, remembers getting a Christmas card once with Santa kneeling beside the manger and thinking to herself: "The generosity of St. Nick poured out from his love of Christ."

From the star on top of your tree to the gifts underneath, there's more to these yuletide traditions than meets the eye.

Take a journey through the "Signs of Christmas" as Billy Graham uncovers the Biblical truth behind seven well-known symbols of this season.



WHY WAS JESUS
PLACED IN A
MANGER?



“This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” —LUKE 2:12

You can be confident that God was in control of every detail of Jesus’ birth—including where He would be born and to whom. And you also can be confident that it was God’s will for His Son to be born in a stable instead of a palace.

Why was this? One reason is because God wanted to show us that Jesus Christ came to bring salvation to everyone—not just the rich and powerful, but the poor and downtrodden. God’s love extends to the whole human race! And Jesus showed us the depth of God’s love by willingly leaving Heaven’s glory and sharing in our poverty.

The real question, however, is this: Have you paid attention to Jesus? What place does He have in your life? This Christmas, may you join with the shepherds and wise men in worshipping Him as your Savior and Lord.

IS IT WRONG
TO HAVE A
**CHRISTMAS
TREE?**



“A tree from the forest is cut down and worked with an axe by the hands of a craftsman. They decorate it with silver and gold.” —JEREMIAH 10:3-4

Some have indicated that this practice is wrong because of the words in Jeremiah 10. These verses, however, do not apply to Christmas trees, but they do condemn the idolatry practiced in Jeremiah’s day. God’s people were following the customs of the heathen who cut down trees, shaped the wood into idols, decorated them with silver and gold ornaments, and worshipped them as gods.

It is important that we keep Christ central and our worship of Him unhindered in our observance of Christmas. However, we do not believe it is unbiblical to have a Christmas tree lighted and decorated in the home or the church.

It has been suggested that the branches of the tree pointing upward can signify praise to God. The star at the top can represent the star of Bethlehem. Also, the green of the evergreens has been recognized as symbolic of eternal life, God’s gift to us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

WHY DO WE
TOP CHRISTMAS
TREES WITH A
STAR?



**“Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?
For we saw his star when it rose and have come to
worship him.” —MATTHEW 2:2**

In the stable of the inn at Bethlehem, a virgin mother lays her child in a manger. Over the cave a bright star shines. What a moment! What an hour!

Many stars shone in the sky, but none like this one. This one shone with aura and brilliance! It was as though God had taken a lamp from the ceiling of Heaven and hung it in the dark sky over a troubled world. Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”* (John 8:12).

No informed person today will deny that the human race walks in darkness. There are dilemmas and problems that seemingly have no answer. The Bible tells us that star is God’s promised peace to the world if we will believe and trust Him.

WHY DO WE
EXCHANGE
GIFTS
AT CHRISTMAS?



“Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.”

—MATTHEW 2:11

“Christmas” begins with Christ—the virgin-born Christ-child, our Savior. The Babe of Bethlehem was not merely a remarkable child, but the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born into this world in the form of a man.

Jesus Christ offered Himself as a free gift for each of us. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16).

God’s gift to the world was despised and rejected over 2,000 years ago and in the life of every person who has rejected Him since that time there has proved to be a fatal defectiveness. Only by receiving God’s gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ can we know forgiveness of sin and life everlasting—the true meaning of Christmas.

WHY DO WE
SEE SO MANY
ANGELS?



“An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.” —LUKE 2:9

Time after time, when angels appeared to people in the Old Testament and the New Testament, the angel would say, “Fear not.”

Are angels in existence today? Do they affect our lives? Do they appear to people today? Occasionally, God may entrust them with special messages, just as He did when the angel Gabriel told Mary she would become the mother of the Son of God, Jesus Christ (see Luke 1:26–38).

The Bible makes it clear that God’s angels are still very much at work, although their ministry is largely unseen by us. Even when they take human form (as they can do on occasion), they may not be recognized as angels.

But for the most part the angels have been given the unseen task of watching over God’s people and guarding them from spiritual and physical harm.

WHY DO WE
DECORATE WITH
LIGHTS?



“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world.’” —JOHN 8:12

Once again, at this sacred season of the year, the world comes under the magic spell of Christmas. Children step with a softer tread and with a light of hope and anticipation in their eyes.

What is happening to the so-common boredom and melancholy of life? Whence comes this new zest, this anticipation, this gracious spirit of sharing? I will tell you what it is: The world once more is being illuminated by the light of the Christmas star.

Real, genuine, vital, personal faith in Jesus Christ gives the soul a new direction and establishes definite goals and aspirations in a human life. It is my prayer that all of us at this precious season may catch a new glimpse of Bethlehem’s light and follow it as did the wise men of old.

WHY DO
SO MANY SONGS
TALK ABOUT
PEACE



**“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not
your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”**

—JOHN 14:27

There is so much talk about “peace on Earth” at Christmas. You probably wish you could have more of it. Even Christmas celebrations—at best—only temporarily take our minds off our problems. Would you like more peace of mind untainted by guilt, bitterness, or conflict?

God has a plan for real personal peace that lasts a lifetime, no matter what your past has been or what your present problems are. When Jesus was miraculously born that first Christmas, the plan was set in motion. None of us can have peace with God apart from Him and the peace He made *“by the blood of his cross”* (Colossians 1:20).

God can give you a new start! He will give His peace to us this Christmas if we put our trust and faith in Him.

WILL YOU
RECEIVE THE
ULTIMATE
PRESENT?

WILL YOU
RECEIVE THE



**You can invite Jesus Christ into your life right now
by praying to God a prayer like this:**

Dear God,

I know that I am a sinner. I want to turn from my sins, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe He died for my sins and that You raised Him to life. I want Him to come into my heart and to take control of my life. I want to trust Jesus as my Savior and follow Him as my Lord from this day forward. In Jesus' Name, amen.

May this Christmas be the most blessed you have ever known—and may you walk every day in perfect fellowship with the Savior.

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

—Romans 10:13

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