

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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"THE BEAUTY..."

BY STEVE NIEMEIER

This is the season things happen that do not happen the rest of the year. While many believe that December the 25th is the actual birthday of Christ. Others do not believe that we know the actual date of His birthday but think celebrating it on this particular day is a good thing. As a result of these two thoughts many will actually become "religious" during this time of year even though they avoided "religion" any other time of the year save Easter.

This has to be considered a "beauty" about this time of year because they are actually thinking about the Son of God. Yet, we are reminded about the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 15:1-9 about the doctrines of men verses the commandments of God. Therefore the thought that it is a "beauty" that the normally non-religious person is actually thinking about Christ is negated because they are in reality following after the teaching of men and not the teaching of Jesus.

Yet, this time of year many will gather with their families when they have not taken the time to do so any other time of the year. Many will give in ways they would not any other time of the year. Many will show acts of kindness in ways that they avoided at other times of the year. In fact many will open their homes to others during this time of the year that they normally would not do any other time in the year. These things are a "beauty" of this time of the year.

There are some beautiful things that happen this time of the year that do not happen the rest of the year. Yet, most of this beauty is only "skin deep" as the reason for this particular holiday season is based upon false teaching and false reasons for celebrating which brings us to the ...

"THE BEAST"

Since this season is based upon false teaching and false reasons then the "beast" of the season shows up brightly. The commercialism based upon the birth of Jesus is an ugly

2

beast because of the financial burden it puts many folks in as well as making money off of our Savior's name.

The account of Jesus' birth in Matthew and Luke tell us some of the events surrounding His birth. Neither of these two accounts nor anywhere in the New Testament scriptures teaches us to celebrate His birth. The emphases of the New Testament scriptures are on His teachings, His obedience to God, His death, burial and resurrection and His promise to come again. In no scripture do we have where His birth is to be commercialized nor even His death commercialized. In fact, His death is to be done in remembrance of Him and certainly any one that has studied God's word knows that there was nothing pertaining to "commercialism" about Jesus.

Outlandish parties will occur during this time of year both in the workplace and at home that many avoid during the rest of the year. Many will partake of alcoholic beverages this time of year that avoid them at other times of the year. Sexual activity increases as a result of many of these parties as people seem to "free" with themselves because of the celebration of the season and particularly the New Year Holiday.

While many seem happier this time of the year it is actually the time of greater depression for a great number of folks. Suicides seem to go up, heavy drinking and drug use is reported, theft climbs and many other "beasts" of the season appear in force.

Debt climbs as many try to buy their children all the materialistic gifts they want even though in actuality many parents cannot afford these gifts and the children would be better off without them. Parents are many times controlled by their children during this time of the year (some are all other times of the year also) as the children do not have the knowledge of enough is enough and the parents do not utilize the wisdom of saying "no" when they should.

The "beauty" of the season and the "beast" of the season are displayed everywhere during this time. While we all look forward to the time with our family and the refreshing thought of the start of a New Year that we have great hopes and dreams of, the reality is that many times we lose the real focus of Jesus and His death during this time and lose sight that the start of every New Year is a closer step to the Day of Judgment and eternity.

Let us beware of the "beasts" of this time of the year and yet let us enjoy the "beauty"

of being with family, friends, brothers and sisters in Christ as we close out a year and move into the another year. Let us not get caught up in man's teachings of this being the season of the birth of Christ and let us hold fast the teachings of the apostles concerning the beautiful life of Christ and what He did for us in His death, burial and resurrection. In so doing we will be properly guided by His truth through this season that will have its beauties and its beasts.

"But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

Matthew 28:5-7

The above article was first run in the 12/17/06 issue of this bulletin. We were asked to re-run this article the last two years and several asked to re-run it again this year.

Winding Down 2011

By Steve Niemeier

Here we are again!

Another year has gone by and

many of us are saying where did it go to? It is truly amazing that the older you get the years go by faster and faster! James sure had it right when he said "What is your life? It is a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." (James 4:14).

It is a good time for us to take the examination Paul mentions in II Corinthians 13:5. Are we in the faith? Is it well with our soul where we are standing with our Lord? Do we have those that we need to go to and straighten some things out? Have we thought about what we are going to do with the opportunity of each day the Lord blesses us with for what remains of our life that is swiftly passing away?

Before we get ahead of ourselves and start thinking about all the resolutions we want to make for 2012 we should stop and ponder on the past year of 2011. What did we learn? What would we change? A chapter of history from the book of our life was written one day at a time in 2011. How does it read?
