

*What
Is
Christmas?*

*by
w.euGene Scott, Ph.D.*

PLUMBLINE PUBLICATIONS

© w. euGene Scott, 1973
389 CHURCH STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. 94114

*What
Is
Christmas?*

*by
w. euGene Scott, Ph.D.*

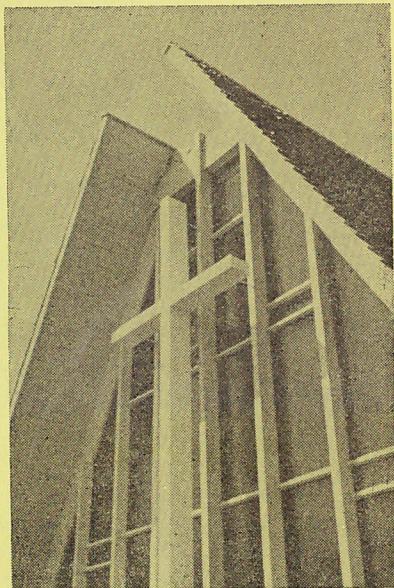
PLUMBLINE PUBLICATIONS

© w. euGene Scott, 1973
389 CHURCH STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. 94114

Copyright, © 1973
by w. euGene Scott, Ph.D.
San Francisco, California, U.S.A.

All Rights Reserved.

The text of this publication, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without permission in writing from the author.



The message of this book was first preached as an annual Christmas Sunday sermon by the author in December, 1972. This picture is of the chapel of Wescott Christian Center in Oroville, California where the message was delivered. This Center is the home office where so much of the author's work originates. The beauty of its cathedral windows, open at the top toward God, with the cross of redemption in front symbolizes much of this book's message, we chose to place its picture here.

—Publishers

INTRODUCTION

“What Is Christmas?”

The great, yet simple preacher, F. B. Meyer, once said: “We don't need any new truths, we just need to re-discover the old truths.”

That's the aim of this book. We don't offer anything new; we just want to remind ourselves of the old and sometimes forgotten truths about Christmas.

I first wrote the outline on a napkin in a restaurant. Taking the letters of the word Christmas, I paused at each one and reflected on a different meaning of Christmas. It helped me.

I hope my restaurant “doodling” which grew into a Christmas sermon will now help you understand its true meaning better.

—Gene Scott
San Francisco, California, U.S.A.

About the Author

Dr. Gene Scott is a scholar and lecturer with a unique background and a varied life experience. Though raised a minister's son, he rebelled against tradition early in life and became agnostic in college. His search for faith caused him to change majors on every degree.

Scott completed a Ph.D. in Philosophies of Education at Stanford University. At Stanford his Doctoral Dissertation dealt with the theology of Reinhold Niebuhr and he did specialized studies in comparative religions and Far Eastern religious philosophies. A hard study of the resurrection of Christ led Dr. Scott to a firm belief in Christ's divinity.

Dr. Scott lives a life which forces him to wear many hats. He now heads the world-wide activities of Wescott Christian Center, serves as editor of "Twin Peaks Sentinel," a San Francisco based newspaper, and directs World Services, International.

He has been a college professor and also served as education consultant on assignments taking him to schools on every continent. As a businessman, he acts as President for five different corporations in Oroville, Berkeley, and San Francisco, California. In this grueling activity he has been forced to make his Christian philosophy apply to life where it's "at." As a convention speaker and teacher his work has been world-wide. Recorded tapes of his lectures have been widely circulated by Bible Voice, Inc. of Hollywood, and Wescott Christian Center of Oroville. His books are circulated throughout the world.

I have known Dr. Scott personally for over 24 years. As a man, his life has consistently expressed the message he speaks. The publishers are most pleased to be identified by this book with another of his works in written form.

—EARL HERRICK
Vice President
Dolores Press, Inc.

Dedicated

to

My Father

The Rev. W. J. Scott

Whose life and bright smile

and acquaintance

with

The Christ of Christmas

has helped make everyday

more like Christmas.

I.

THE BIBLE RECORD

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was . . . a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

(Luke 2:11-14.)

II.

“WHAT IS CHRISTMAS?”

A

New Look AT

An

Old Truth!

C STANDS FOR CHRIST

CHRISTMAS IS CHRIST. YOU DON'T HAVE TO START THERE, BUT YOU SHOULD: WITH CHRIST THE PERSON. YOU CAN READ THE BIBLE FOR CREEDS, FOR RULES OF BEHAVIOR. YOU CAN READ IT AS HISTORY, AND YOU CAN READ IT TO FIND DIRECTIONS FOR RITUAL. AND YOU CAN STILL MISS THE ESSENCE OF WHAT IT IS, WHICH IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A PERSON, ABOUT A PERSON.

EVERY GIANT IN GOD'S BOOK DIFFERS

FROM THE OTHER IN QUALITIES OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR, BUT YOU'LL FIND ONE COMMON DENOMINATOR THAT APPEARS THROUGH ALL THE OTHER MATTERS OF THEIR RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE: A **LIVING RELATIONSHIP** WITH A **LIVING PERSON!**

THE WORD "CHRISTIAN" MEANS: "FOLLOWER OF CHRIST," AND THAT IS A RELATIONSHIP WITH A PERSON. IT'S NOT WHAT ONE DOES AND DOES NOT DO THAT MAKES HIM A CHRISTIAN. A CHRISTIAN FOLLOWS CHRIST.

BEFORE CHRIST THE RELATIONSHIP WAS LARGELY AN UNSEEN RELATIONSHIP WITH A

REALITY NOT SEEN UNTIL THAT FIRST CHRISTMAS DAY WHEN THE UNSEEN BECAME SEEN. THAT'S WHEN THE SUBSTANCE OF GOD MOVED ONTO THE STAGE OF HISTORY. THAT'S WHAT WAS LAID IN A MANGER! GOD REVEALED HIMSELF IN A PERSON. **CHRISTMAS WAS BORN.**

H STANDS FOR HELPER

WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS JESUS? WHEN THE ANGEL APPEARED TO JOSEPH, THE FATHER OF CHRIST, TO ANNOUNCE TO HIM THAT MARY WAS TO BEAR A SON CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, HE SAID, "THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME **JESUS.**" (MATTHEW 1:21.) YOU KNOW WHERE THAT NAME COMES FROM? JESUS IS THE GREEK DESIGNATION FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT NAME, "JOSHUA," MEANING LITERALLY "GOD OUR HELPER."

AT CHRISTMAS IN THAT MANGER, IN THAT

LITTLE BABY CHILD, WE CONFRONT GOD THE PERSON COMING OUT OF THE UNSEEN TO THE SEEN, AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED **GOD, OUR HELPER.** THAT'S WHAT GOD GAVE US ON THE FIRST CHRISTMAS DAY: A PERSON TO HELP US!

R STANDS FOR REDEEMER

WE READ IN THE GOSPELS THAT JESUS CAME TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM, AND TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE THE WORD "RANSOM" WAS THE PRICE YOU ALWAYS PAID TO RESTORE LOST FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE, TO PROVIDE LIFE WHERE DEATH WAS TO BE THE PORTION, TO PAY A PENALTY IN ORDER TO SET FREE OR REDEEM THE ONE WHO WAS IN BONDAGE OR GOING TO DIE. THAT WAS A **RANSOM.** JESUS CAME TO GIVE **HIS LIFE** AS A RANSOM, AND AMONG THE JOYS OF CHRIST-

MAS, REMEMBER HE CAME **TO REDEEM** US ALL THROUGH THAT RANSOM.

THE BOOK OF RUTH IS THE ONLY BOOK IN THE BIBLE THAT PORTRAYS THE ROLE OF A KINSMAN-REDEEMER OUT OF HEBREW THEOLOGY IN THE PERSON OF BOAZ. AT CHRISTMAS TIME I LIKE TO THINK ABOUT THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER. UNDER JEWISH LAW, HE HAD TO HAVE FOUR QUALITIES: (1) HE MUST HAVE THE **MEANS** TO PAY FOR THE REDEMPTION; (2) HE HAD TO DO IT **VOLUNTARILY** WITHOUT COERCION; (3) HE MUST ACTUALLY

PAY IT; AND (4) HE HAD TO BE ONE **NEAR OF KIN**.

THAT LAST ITEM IS WHY CHRISTMAS HAS THE MEANING IT HAS. NOT FROM HEAVEN'S THRONE COULD THE HELP MAN NEEDED IN REDEMPTION BE GIVEN. IT HAD TO BE A **REDEEMER NEAR OF KIN**. SO HE HAD TO BE CONCEIVED AND BORN OF WOMAN, THAT WE MIGHT HAVE ONE WHO IS "KINNED," WHO IS TOUCHED WITH AN AWARENESS OF OUR INFIRMITIES. THAT'S WHAT CHRISTMAS IS: HE HAD TO BE BORN OF FLESH TO BECOME LIKE US IN ORDER TO BE A **REDEEMER-KINSMAN**.

I STANDS FOR IMMANUEL

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT GOD IS LIKE, THOSE DISCIPLES COULD SAY, "HE'S WITH US." "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD," JOHN SAID, ". . . AND THE WORD WAS GOD . . . AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG US . . ." (JOHN 1:1,14). FROM THE ROUGH LANGUAGE OF WARTIME GRECIAN ARMIES OF THE DAY, THE WORD "DWELT" MEANT "TO STRIKE A TENT AND MOVE IN." LITERALLY, THE WORD WAS GOD, AND THAT WORD WAS MADE FLESH

AND "TENTED." GOD WITH US — IMMANUEL! (THE NEW TESTAMENT SPELLS IT WITH "E" BUT THE OLD PROPHET WORD WAS WITH AN "I.") GOD STRUCK A TENT OF HUMAN FLESH IN A MISERABLE LITTLE LAND, IN THOSE DIRTY, DUSTY ROADS TO BE "WITH" US! AN ETERNAL CHRISTMAS **PRESENCE** WAS GIVEN THERE.

S STANDS FOR SERMON

THE LATIN BIBLE READS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL: IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE "SERMO," AND THE "SERMO" WAS MADE FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US. THE ENGLISH WORD "SERMON" IS A COGNATE OF THE LATIN WORD "SERMO." A SERMON WAS THEREFORE **BORN** ON THAT FIRST CHRISTMAS. THAT SERMON WAS CHRIST. AND THAT'S THE ONLY TRUE SERMON. GOD CAME TO PREACH A SERMON, AND THE SERMON WAS HIMSELF.

IF THERE IS ANY ONE THING THAT STANDS

OUT ABOUT JESUS CHRIST IN CONTRAST TO OTHER FOUNDERS OF RELIGIONS, IT IS THAT **ONLY JESUS PREACHED HIMSELF**. THAT BABE LYING IN THAT MANGER CAME TO WALK DUSTY STREETS, TO BE SEEN, HEARD AND WATCHED BY MANKIND. AND IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT GOD IS LIKE — HE IS LIKE JESUS. DO YOU KNOW WHAT STOOD OUT IN NEW TESTAMENT PREACHERS? OTHER LEARNED MEN SAID OF THEM THAT THEY WERE IGNORANT AND UNLEARNED MEN, BUT THEY SAW SOMETHING ELSE. THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS. THEY COMMUNICATED THE TRUE

SERMON, WHICH MUST EVER BE THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE: KNOW CHRIST! (JOHN 17:3.)

T STANDS FOR TRUTH

THE BIBLE SAYS, "GOD IS LOVE." THAT HE IS! BUT THE BIBLE ALSO SAYS OF JESUS, "HE CAME **FULL** OF GRACE **AND TRUTH.**" THE JOY I HAVE AT CHRISTMAS IS THE REVELATION OF GOD'S INTEGRITY, AS WELL AS HIS LOVE. GOD IS AGAINST SIN. HE SAYS, "FOR SIN CAME DEATH." BUT HE LOVES ME, AND ONE WHO DID NOT SIN HAD TO DIE TO PAY THE PRICE THAT TOOK CARE OF MY SINS. GOD KEPT HIS WORD.

WHEN I SEE THAT BABE IN THE MANGER WHO ULTIMATELY PAID THE PRICE OF YOUR

AND MY REDEMPTION WITH HIS LIFE, EVERY CHALLENGE TO REDEMPTION MUST FALL AT THE FEET OF GOD, **WHO KEPT HIS WORD.** CALVARY EXPRESSED LOVE, BUT IT WAS MADE NECESSARY BY TRUTH. GOD WOULD KEEP HIS WORD AND CAUSE FULL PAYMENT FOR SIN — EVEN THOUGH PAYING THE FULL PRICE HIMSELF. THAT "SCAR" ON CHRISTMAS MUST ALWAYS REMIND US OF THE PRICE FOR THE GIFT.

M STANDS FOR MESSIAH

WHEN SIN CAME, GOD COULD NOT JOIN WITH SIN, AND MAN WAS SEPARATED FROM THE SOURCE OF LIFE ITSELF. WHEN JESUS WAS BORN, ". . . THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST." (MATTHEW 18:11.) THAT'S THE MISSION OF HIS COMING.

MESSIAH MEANS "DELIVERER." GOD'S DELIVERER FOR US FROM THAT WHICH IS THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR SINS: THAT'S THE MESSIAH CONCEPT IN ITS FULLNESS. THE

DEATH OF JESUS OPENED THE DOOR FOR GOD TO REACH AND DELIVER US OUT OF OUR SEPARATION TO DELIVER US FROM SIN AND ITS DEATH.

THE MESSIAH IN A MANGER WAS THE DELIVERER. THAT'S WHY THE ANGEL SANG THAT FIRST CHRISTMAS NIGHT: "FEAR NOT: FOR BEHOLD I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY . . .!" (LUKE 2:10.)

A STANDS FOR ADAM THE SECOND

WHEN CHRISTMAS CAME, ONE ARRIVED FROM HEAVEN'S THRONE TO HELP, TO BECOME NEAR OF KIN WITH THE PRICE OF REDEMPTION. BY THE FIRST ADAM CAME DEATH, BY THE SECOND ADAM CAME LIFE! (I. COR. 15:45-55.) PEACE WITH GOD IS OBTAINED, JOY TO THE WORLD! YOU CAN RELATE TO GOD AGAIN BECAUSE A NEW RACE IS BORN. THE BIBLE SAYS THAT HE IS THE FIRSTBORN **AMONG** MANY BRETHREN. HE NOT ONLY DIED FOR MY SINS AND YOURS, BUT GOD RAISED HIM UP TO REDEEM US ALL THAT WE MIGHT

BE BORN INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD. THAT GIVES US **HOPE** FOR LIFE ETERNAL AND THAT, TOO, IS WHAT CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT.

S STANDS FOR SON

THERE ARE TWO INTERESTING REFERENCES TO THE "SON" IN THE PSALMS. "THE LORD HATH SAID UNTO ME, THOU ART MY SON; THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE." (PSALM 2:7) THE HEBREW WORD FOR "SON" USED HERE IS "BEN," AND REFERS TO THE FIRSTBORN. "KISS THE SON." (PSALMS 2:12) HERE, THE HEBREW WORD FOR "SON" IS "BAR" AND IT REFERS TO THE ONE WHO CARRIES THE FULL INHERITANCE OF THE RACE, NOT JUST THE FRONT

RUNNER OF THE LINE.

THE DIFFERENCE IS SUBTLE; BUT THE MEANING IS DIFFERENT IN HEBREW. CHRIST THE FIRSTBORN SON OF GOD, ALSO CARRIES THE FULL INHERITANCE OF GOD (PHIL. 2:9-11).

GOD PLACES US IN CHRIST, AND HE PUTS US INTO THIS LINEAGE, AND HE SAYS, "THOU ART MY SON." THEN HE SAYS, "KISS THE SON," AND HERE IT IS THE SON WHO IS THE HEIR OF ALL THINGS; AND WE BECOME "JOINT HEIRS" (ROM. 8:17) WITH HIM WHEN WE **ACCEPT** HIS LORDSHIP OVER OUR LIVES (SYMBOLIZED BY "KISS THE SON" WHICH SO

BEAUTIFULLY EXPRESSES LOVE).

OH WHAT A CHRISTMAS GIFT.

SO, WHAT IS CHRISTMAS?

CHRISTMAS IS CHRIST: OUR HELPER, REDEEMER-KINSMAN, IMMANUEL, SERMON, TRUTH, MESSIAH, THE SECOND ADAM — THE SON. THAT BABE IN THE MANGER ONE DAY WILL RULE OVER ALL THIS EARTH. ONE DAY HE'LL BECOME KING OF KINGS, LORD OF LORDS. AND YOU CAN JOIN HIS KINGDOM IN THE SYMBOLIC ACT OF GIVING YOUR LIFE TO HIM. "KISS THE SON" ON **CHRISTMAS!**

Books by Same Author

A HOLE IN ROME

THE LAST WORD

THE STRANGEST STORY IN THE BIBLE

OH LORD, DELIVER ME FROM
MY PROBLEMS. . .

but let me keep my pigs!

FROM "LODEBAR" . . . *a place of no pastures*

LIFT UP NOW THINE EYES

BORN BLIND? *So what . . .*

Don't bother me with questions,

Just show me the need.

Books by Same Author

FOUR MOUNTAINS IN A TROUBLED LAND

GOD COULDN'T BE EVERYWHERE?
SO HE MADE MOTHERS!

THE BLESSED LIFE IN THE VALLEY OF WEEPING

GOD'S FORMULA FOR JOY

JESUS CHRIST . . . SUPER-NUT or
SUPER-NATURAL?
(A Philosopher Looks at Christ)