

Christmas – Tradition or Teshuva?

A Note from Katharine Weiss



For me, growing up in a Catholic home was centered on Christmas Eve service, a brightly lit pretty tree, and shiny packages.

For Myles, the winter holiday season was very different. No midnight mass and the lights were on the Chanukah Menorah, a memorial of God's preserving power and the eternal covenant with the Jewish people.

When God brought Myles and me together, we knew that the Mighty One of Israel was doing something special between us through the Messiah, Jesus. He taught us early on in our relationship about the two of us becoming one through Messiah.

We learned that we could have the best of both worlds, the best of both family lines.

By the time our two sons were old enough to understand, we walked them through the myths of Santa Claus and taught them about Nicholas, whose life was a vibrant testimony to gift-giving based on faith-filled charity.

With our boys, our focus became Jesus, the Jewish Messiah and His mission in the earth. Salvation through faith in Him was the holiday theme, and we took care to connect it to Chanukah. We taught them the Christmas story and the angelic announcement from Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace; goodwill toward men." The boys understood that the wise men from the east came with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh – gifts fit for a king.

It was natural for our sons to associate the two holidays together, and to know that without Chanukah there would be no Christmas. If Antiochus Epiphanes had extinguished the Messianic line almost 200 years before the birth of Yeshua...He would not have been born! Over the years, Myles has developed a message, "Chanukah, Christmas, and You." It has been a blessing for many in the Body and those who do not yet know Yeshua.

As a family, Christmas for us includes a return to the simple things, especially putting Jesus first. Beyond the traditions of culture, we celebrate it as a form of Teshuva, a repentant return to first love. We battle the pressure of materialism, and we would make fresh commitments each year to "keep it simple" and focus on the blending of the two stories, Jewish and Christian. I grew fonder of biblical history and the reality of God's faithfulness each year. The multiplication of the anointing oil and the light it symbolizes became ever more present in our home.

We never tried to convince others not to celebrate traditional Christmas, but we allowed the season to proclaim the message of the seamless connection between the two holidays.

Although December 25 is a Greco-Roman adaptation based on the winter solstice, it provides a wonderful opportunity to reach for godly practice and to proclaim the good news of Yeshua, the Light of the World.

This year, let Chanukah (John 10:22) light up your Christmas!

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