

A Christmas Carol  
Matthew 1:21

Introduction

**Christmas Quiz: Joseph was considering setting Mary aside – divorcing their betrothal because Mary was pregnant. An angel appeared and told him, Mary would give birth to a child, and Joseph was to name the child, what?**

- a. Jesus
- b. Emmanuel
- c. Joshua
- d. Yeshua
- e. Jehovah is Salvation

If you looked in your bulletin, you would have seen the Matthew 1:21 Scripture and known the answer was a – Jesus.

**Matthew 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.**

But that is not the only answer to the question. Mary and Joseph didn't name their son Jesus. We call Him Jesus. They named Him Yeshua or Joshua. Mary and Joseph neither one probably ever uttered the name Jesus. They spoke Aramaic. They name their Son Yeshua, or as we say it, Joshua.

**Christmas Quiz: Joseph was considering setting Mary aside – divorcing their betrothal because Mary was pregnant. An angel appeared and told him, Mary would give birth to a child, and Joseph was to name the child, what?**

- f. Jesus
- g. Emmanuel
- h. Joshua
- i. Yeshua
- j. Jehovah is Salvation

The correct answer to the quiz question is, a,c,d,e. Or, all but b.

Joshua is the English version of the Hebrew name Yeshua. It means Jehovah is Salvation. Jesus is the English version of the Greek version of the name.

Regardless of how we pronounce it, He was given this name because Jesus came to save the world. Many people don't understand this. Many people think Jesus was a great prophet or philosopher, or a political figure who was killed before He got the chance to make more happen. Jesus came to this earth to save.

Jesus' was given a name that also described what He was here to do. Jesus came to save, He came to redeem the world.

The story in the Christmas Carol is about one man's redemption. It is a story about Ebenezer Scrooge and his journey from being a selfish, miserly, miserable man, to understanding what life is really all about.

Charles Dickens wrote A Christmas Carol in 1843. **PICTURE of the book cover.**

There have been about 30 movies made over the years of this novel. The first in 1901. A new one has come out this year. Silent movies, black and white, color, animated, the Muppets, Mickey Mouse, and Barbie, and others. The movie is retold over and over not because it speaks to the real meaning of Christmas, but rather it speaks to the result of a life lived without regard to others. It is a story of a miser who has had no regard for anyone but himself, and is content to live that way, until he is shown how his selfishness affects him, and affects those around him.

When the book was written, in the mid 1800's, it was estimated there were about 10 million people living in England, and over 1 million of them were living in abject poverty. The poor were barely surviving. Many of the rich didn't care. The book was written to help people understand how we are really supposed to live.

Dickens didn't write it as a religious book, but rather as a way of showing us how we are to live for one another and care for one another. There are several things we can learn from this book, this movie. The first...

### **1. There is a little bit of Scrooge inside all of us.**

- a. Scrooge refused to help anyone but himself.
  - i. Anytime we get selfish, anytime we stop considering the other person before we think of ourselves, that bit of Scrooge comes out.
  - ii. When he was 12 years old, Dickens himself was forced to work in a union house because his father was sent to debtor's prison. These experiences as well as others led to the writing of this book.
  - iii. At the beginning of the book, some men come to ask Scrooge to make a contribution for the poor. Scrooge's response was, "Are there no prisons? Are the union work houses, are they still in operation? I can't afford to make idle people merry. I support those institutions I have mentioned, and I expect the poor to make use of them." The men asking for the contribution replied there are those who cannot go to these places, and some would rather die than to go to them. Scrooge replied, "If they'd rather die, they'd better do it and decrease the surplus population."
  - iv. It had gotten to the point where he didn't care what anyone else thought. He knew he was right, and everyone else was wrong.
  - v. Just remember, when you think the entire world is wrong, and you are the only one in the right, you might want to re-think your position.
  - vi. **Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.**
- b. Scrooge only trusted in his money.

- i. **Proverbs 11:28 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.**
- ii. Scrooge did not want to pay Cratchet for Christmas off. He thought it was a waste of time and money. **CLIP of Cratchet getting the day off**
- iii. Scrooge refused to even accept the friendship offered by his nephew.
  - 1. He ridiculed his nephew for marrying a poor girl, instead of marrying for money. He refused to go to the nephew's house for dinner. He refused to make friends with someone who was not like him.
  - 2. He couldn't understand what it means to love someone for who they are, and to care for someone more than you care for yourself.
- c. There is a little Scrooge in all of us, even the best of us because no one is perfect.
  - i. **Romans 3:23 ...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...**
  - ii. One of Satan's best tools is our pride. He is so good at convincing us that we are good enough, or we can do enough to become perfect enough.
  - iii. God tells us, cannot do this on our own.
    - 1. He offers grace because salvation cannot be earned.
    - 2. He offers peace because satisfaction in the things of this life cannot be found.
    - 3. He offers purpose and meaning because anything here in this life is temporary, and doesn't last.

## 2. **Into all our lives, God sends wake-up calls**

- a. With Scrooge:
  - i. Marley
    - 1. **CLIP of doorknocker**
    - 2. Marley reminded Scrooge the two of them were the same. Scrooge understood this, and couldn't figure out why that was a bad thing – they were both businessmen. Business and making money was a good thing.
  - ii. The ghosts of Christmas past, present and future. Tried to help him understand the futility of living for ones self. Even though he saw and understood the decisions he should have made in the past, he was still content to remain who and what he was.
- b. In our lives, all kinds of things happen.
  - i. **Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them"—**
  - ii. With some, age and all that comes with it is a wake up call. It can be good fortune or bad. It can be disease or death. No matter what it is, there will come times in our lives when we are reminded we are mortal, and this life will end.
  - iii. There are some of us who are like Scrooge. God puts things in our lives, we lose our job, our kid gets way out of line, we get a warning instead of a ticket from the highway patrolman, and we ignore the warnings. We disregard the wake up calls. We are satisfied with the way our lives are, or we are so lazy we don't want to try to change.

- iv. Because of their severity, sometimes those wake up calls are hard to ignore. But there are a whole lot of us who still choose not to change.
- c. We determine how we respond to those wake-up calls by what we do
  - i. **Proverbs 19:23 The fear of the LORD leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.**
  - ii. As we go through those wake calls in our lives, some will love God more. Some will lose faith in God. The ones who can rest content, the ones who are untouched by the trouble life throws at them are the ones who trust in God.
  - iii. In the book, Tim Cratchet (Tiny Tim) was crippled. He lived in pain. He came home from church and said he hoped people had seen him in church as a cripple. He said, "It might be pleasant for them to remember on Christmas day who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see."
  - iv. Many of us have met people who go through the hard times and are able to hang on to God. We see this. We know God is there for us as well, and yet we still refuse to trust God.
  - v. In the Christmas story, there were different people who got wake-up calls:
    - 1. The shepherds heard that call, and came to Jesus.
    - 2. Herod heard that wake-up call, and tried to silence the call by trying to silence Jesus.
    - 3. The religious leaders who said they had been living for the Messiah, heard He was here, and ignored that wake-up call, because they just didn't want to change.
    - 4. The Wise men heard the wake-up call, and travelled a great distance, and gave up of themselves in response to the call.
  - vi. The third thing we need to understand, is when we get a wake-up call, if we listen, and we learn, and we give ourselves to God, like Scrooge, we can be redeemed.

### 3. **All can be redeemed**

- a. This means, **Even the best of us needs redemption. Even the worst of us can be redeemed.**
- b. Being confronted with his own death, Scrooge had changed from the man he was.
- c. **CEMETARY CLIP – I am a changed man...** Scrooge said, "Believe me. I am not the man I was..."
- d. All can be changed. All can be redeemed. Just as all have sinned, all can be saved.
- e. **CLIP – Cemetery at peace** At the beginning of the movie, Scrooge and the minister who presided over the funeral of Marley were talking. The minister, in an attempt to offer some comfort to Scrooge said, "At least now he is at peace." Scrooge replied, "He's not at peace. He's dead."
- f. When we are done with this life, will we be at peace, or just dead?
- g. Look again at our Scripture: **Matthew 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.**
- h. Jesus came to save. He can make it so after we leave this place, we can be at peace, instead of just dead. Scrooge was right, if you are just dead, you are not at peace.

Conclusion

**CLIP OF Marley wearing the chains he forged in his life.**

What chains are holding us down? What is keeping us from waking up? Why are we holding on to that Scrooge part of us? Our chains are being forged by what we do in this life? Our business is the common good. Our business is God and others. It is not ourselves. Anything else is a chain that ties us down. Do we want to be tied down by these chains, or are we ready and willing to let Jesus remove them from our souls?

Jesus came to save. His very name says this. Will you accept what He offers, or will you turn it down. The choice is yours.