

## December 19<sup>th</sup>

### All the trimmings

Christmas decorations are as old as Christmas itself. They are mentioned in ancient descriptions of the Roman feast Saturnalia, which was believed to have originated in the 5th century BC.

The tradition of a decorated tree is old since the Celts already decorated a tree, the symbol of life at the time of the winter solstice.<sup>[5]</sup> The Scandinavians did the same for the Yule festival, which was held around the same date as Christmas.

Tertullian complained to the 2nd century that Christians in North Africa decorated their homes with greenery, a pagan symbol.<sup>[6]</sup>

A Christmas tree inside a home.

The Christmas tree was first used by German Lutherans in the 16th century, with records indicating that a Christmas tree was placed in the Cathedral of Strassburg in 1539, under the leadership of the Protestant Reformer, Martin Bucer.

Modern Christmas trees originated during the Renaissance in early modern Germany. Its 16th-century origins are sometimes associated with Protestant Christian reformer Martin Luther, who is said to have first added lighted candles to an evergreen tree.

**Why decorate? Story of the nativity on trees, the moravians put candles on their tree, other reforming christians used trees differently. Put the nativity on the tree and pulled them off each day to make a full story.**

**But here's the biggy: Why party?**

**Christmas breakfast after mass. The mass was early so breakfast was later on.**

**So the service , the Christ-mass, was followed by the Christ-breakfast. Break fast was exactly that, you broke or stopped the fasting by eating. It was a thanks meal or feast and the theory of the medieval monks was that if it was about celebrating Jesus then it had to be the best they could muster. Consequently it**

**became the most sumptuous meal possible with the the best possible produce and beverages. The meal too was about remembering. The Celtic monks had teaching components much like the Jews had for their Passover feasts.**

**Why is remembering so important.**

**The Old Testament and the new us full of God telling us to remember. Why, because we need to be reminded, or have the Jesus message reinforced in our minds.**

**It's about remembering.**

2 Timothy 2:8

English Standard Version

<sup>8</sup> Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel,

Yep, what is it we are to remember?

1 Peter 1:3

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

As I said a few weeks ago, Christmas reminds us of the reason Jesus came- Jesus purpose was to save us.

So let's think of some practical ways of using Christmas to remember what the Jesus message is about.

Notice in that 1Peter 1:3 statement.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's worship, remember to worship Jesus this Christmas. How do we remember that? Carols

The next bit

2.

According to his great mercy,

That's an amazing gift, yep remember God's mercy when we receive gifts.

3.

he has caused us to be born again

That's about growing and the tree can remind us of being born again. Think of the pine cone seeds. New trees, new life.

4.

A living hope.

A future, a light to light our way. Candles or even fairy lights and Christmas lights can remind us of our future hope.

5.

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

The whole of Christmas is about the big picture of God's plan.

Here is the thing, we can just roll along this Christmas and enjoy the party or we can truly remember the Jesus message and what it means to us. It does take some thought processing, some effort to include the Jesus message in the events around us. Christmas is a remembrance tool, let's use it effectively.