

Why We Don't Need a Nativity Scene

We now find ourselves in the season when much of the religious world will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The Christmas holiday is not required in New Testament Christianity. However, the freedom and liberty found in Christ permits one to observe a special day if observed to the Lord. If one chooses not to observe the day to the Lord, then he does not observe it. (*Rom. 14:6*) One tradition observed during Christmas time is the nativity scene which is described in Luke Chapter 2. The display of the infant Jesus lying in a feed trough surrounded by his parents, shepherds, and livestock can be found in miniature figurines, large yard displays, or with live actors and animals. For some, such displays help them to visualize the virgin birth of the Savior, however, it is not necessary for the mature Christian.

Without faith it is impossible to please God (*Heb. 11:6*) and faith is based on evidence or confidence of things not seen. (*Heb. 11:1*) As the Apostle Paul spoke of the resurrection, he said, "*For we walk by faith, not by sight.*" (*2 Cor. 5:7*) We don't have to witness someone rising from the grave to believe that it happened. In the same sense, I don't have to go see a life-size recreation of Noah's ark, a model of the Old Testament temple, take a trip to Israel, watch a movie about Jesus, or have a nativity scene in my yard in order to increase and confirm my faith. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (*Rom. 10:17*) Faith is increased by living for and serving God (*James 2:14-24*). Visual aids play an important part in educating our children (and some adults) in the biblical story. But as we grow in spiritual maturity we can put away childish things. (*1 Cor. 13:11*) Our hope and trust is in a spiritual God that does not live in places made by hands (*Acts 7:48*) and "*hope that is seen is not hope.*" (*Rom. 8:24*)

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