

Tree trimmed. ✓ Angel placed. ✓ Gifts wrapped. ✓

But WHY??

We trim the tree, place the angel on top, and fill up the space underneath with beautifully wrapped gifts.

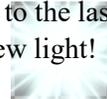
But, do you know *why*?

Angels:

Some of us top our Christmas Tree with a beautiful angel, you can find them hovering over a nativity scene, and you see them depicted on all kinds of Christmas decor. From before Jesus's story ever begins, we find God's messengers make three appearances: to Mary to announce the coming of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38), to Joseph to tell him what was conceived in Mary was of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20-24), and to the shepherds to announce the birth of Jesus, after which "a great company of the heavenly hosts" appeared (Luke 2:8-14). Understandably, angels have become a familiar symbol of Christmas time! Many passages in the Bible describe angels as powerful beings, not just the feminine, gentle toppers we see atop our trees. They are actually protecting and guarding us! It could be fun, as a family, to read more of God's Word about the real power behind God's messengers and angelic hosts, for they are truly mighty beings!

Christmas Trees:

The true origin of Christmas trees is still debated amongst historians. But, as Christians, we can see a profound connection between our faith and trees. From the beginning of our story to the end, trees play a significant role! At creation, God designed the trees of the Garden of Eden: the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the Tree of Life, and filled the garden with "trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food." (Genesis 1:9). The temptation that brought sin into the world hung on a tree AND the freedom from that very sin hung on a different type of tree, in Jesus Christ Himself! In Revelation 2, we are told that we will "have the right to eat from the Tree of Life again," in knowing Christ! So, literally from the first book of the Bible to the last, trees play a significant, symbolic role in our faith. That gives our decorated Christmas trees a whole new light!



Gifts:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him" (John 3:16-17). God gave the ultimate gift to His creation—His Son. Jesus gave the ultimate gift of Himself—His very life and blood. The wise men gave gifts to Jesus at His birth. St. Nicholas gave gifts to the needy anonymously, and even his tradition has continued and transformed into Christmas presents and St. Nick or Santa in North America! Gifts are all around during this season. May we keep our eyes open to the needs of others around us, for God's Word says, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for Me." (Matthew 25:34-40). Jesus taught that giving to those in need is actually credited to us as if we gave to HIM!

