

“WHY CHRISTMAS HAPPENED”

1st In Series: “Christmas Was Not Optional”

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INTRODUCTION:

This Christmas season I will ask us some questions that may, at first, seem silly but are in fact not asked or answered enough. You may have already noticed that our Christmas Series this year is titled “Christmas Was Not Optional.” But is this really true? *Almighty God, Creator of all that exists had NO other options than to send His Son – a part of His Triune self – to come into this hostile, messed-up world not just in the form of a man but as a man; and not just as a man but as an infant? Born in a feeding trough to a teenage, virgin mom?*

Seriously, have you ever really thought about why? Yes, we acknowledge that this did happen. Perhaps, we even acknowledge that it all happened exactly as the Scriptures describe. But did it really HAVE to happen *that way*? Christmas is jolly, but would it really make a difference if we remembered it or not? Christmas is nice and cute, but isn't Easter the Holy Day that really matters? After all, everybody knows two of the four Gospels (Mark & John) don't even specifically refer to Jesus' birth at all. **Just why DID Christmas happen and why did it happen the way it did?**

SCRIPTURE: 1JOHN 3:1-10

PRAYER

I.) JESUS CAME TO **DESTROY**

- The key that unlocks this section of Scripture we just read and the tie that binds it all together is the simply profound and direct statement in **v. 8b**: “***The Son of God was revealed for this purpose: to destroy the Devil's works.***”
- The idea translated here as “revealed” refers to His initial physical arrival (birth).
- He was born in the flesh as an infant man, *not* to look cute. *Not* to create a memorable warm and fuzzy tale to make people feel good for centuries. *Not* to give us an excuse for a month of celebration, consumerism and vacations. *Not* even to tell us good stories and lessons that would make us better spiritually dead human beings.
- Jesus was sent and came into the world in this way for exactly and only one purpose: **to destroy!**

A.) What? **Sin**

- “***the Devil's works***”
- The works of the Devil are to thwart and rebel against God. To seek to interfere with His will and pleasure. To wreak the havoc on God's special creation, made in His image, that Lucifer would like to but cannot wreak on God Himself.
- In a word, the devil's works is SIN. But what is sin?
- **v. 4** “***Everyone who commits sin also breaks the law; sin is the breaking of law.***”
- What law? God's law! That is, God's revealed will in every aspect for His creation!
- Pastor and author, John Piper, explains it this way:

“Lawlessness is living as though your own ideas are superior to God's. Lawlessness says, 'God may demand it, but I don't prefer it.' Lawlessness says, 'God may promise it, but I don't want it.' Lawlessness replaces God's law with my contrary desires. I become a law to myself. Lawlessness is rebellion against the right of God to make laws and govern His creatures . . . The work of Satan is to tempt us to reject the authority of God and become like God ourselves. Satan works to nurture and cultivate the pride that puts its own desires above the law of God. This is lawlessness; this is the essence of sin; and this is what the Son of God came to destroy in you and me”
(from his message “The Son of God Appeared to Destroy the Works of the Devil,” 12/23/1984).

- **He did not come simply to destroy the guilt of sin, but to destroy sinning itself!**

B.) Why? Hate

- Make no mistake, friends and guests, there is One Thing that Almighty God – the very embodiment and definition of Love – absolutely hates: SIN!
- God does *not* simply dislike, not prefer or regret Sin. **Scripture is very clear from Genesis through Revelation that the LORD God Almighty absolutely with every once of His Being hates, abhors, and detests Sin in all of it's forms and no matter the circumstances. In the light of His Holiness acts, attitudes and thoughts of sin appear only as pure abomination!**

C.) How? His Righteousness

- Just as darkness can only be destroyed by flooding it with light, so Sin – the works of the Devil can only be destroyed by the flooding of Perfect Righteousness.
- And the only Perfect Righteousness among men is that embodied in the incarnate Son of God, Jesus the Christ (Messiah).

He accomplishes this in two steps:

1.) His Appearing

- He enters into and engages our world in the flesh, fully as a man, and through all the same stages, trials and challenges.
- Through it all He lives, ultimately dies and physically rises again in Perfect Righteousness – without sin.
- Through His life, then, He destroys the seemingly unconquerable hold Sin has had over all human beings!
- In every way, without exception, He lives the sinless and victorious life that Adam could have but chose not to and that we never could.

2.) Our Re-Birth

- **1 John 3:1-3, 9-10**
- Through His life and sacrificial death, Jesus proved and established that His Righteousness is more than sufficient to overcome and destroy Sin. Yet, unrighteous humanity continues to be ruled under the iron yoke of Sin . . .
- UNLESS we could somehow live in such a way as to be covered by and empowered with HIS Righteousness! In our physical birth we entered the world already corrupted by sin and unrighteous. But, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and His Righteousness, we may be born a second time – spiritually. And, this time, we may be born with His Righteousness imputed unto us, undeserving as we may be!

- The expanded truths here about adoption and living with or without sin in Christ, are ideas we will greater examine next week.

Jesus, then, came to destroy Sin for an even greater purpose still:

II.) JESUS CAME TO DELIVER

A.) Who? All Who Would Be Free

- ALL those who truly recognize their spiritual sickness and desire for it to be utterly destroyed and replaced with pure righteousness!
- **Mark 2:17** *"When Jesus heard this, He told them, 'Those who are well don't need a doctor, but the sick do need one. I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners.'"*
- **Matthew 5:3-6** *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are those who mourn, because they will be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, because they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, because they will be filled."*
- **2Peter 3:9** *The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.*

B.) Why? Love

- With the same fullness, passion and determination that God came to destroy Sin because He hated it, so He came also to offer deliverance to all humanity out of His absolute love for them!
- **John 3:16-18** *"For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. Anyone who believes in Him is not judged, but anyone who does not believe is already judged, because he has not believed in the name of the One and Only Son of God."*
- **Romans 5:8-11** *But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us! Much more then, since we have now been declared righteous by His blood, we will be saved through Him from wrath. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by His life! And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

C.) For What Purpose? Relationship

- **2Corinthians 5:14-21**
- Pure, unbroken, undivided relationship with God above and fellow believers here below!

D.) How? **Imputed Righteousness**

- As previously explained, through our faith Jesus imputes upon us – according to His grace – His righteousness which destroys Sin and delivers us from slavery to our sinful tendencies and temptations!

Jesus came to destroy Sin and deliver all who would be free. To truly accomplish this, however, it was necessary also that . . .

III.) JESUS CAME **INCARNATE**

- That is, fully God and yet fully human and in the flesh.

Why?

A.) To Connect The **Physical** and **Spiritual**

- Before Jesus, all humanity was born and remained physically alive but spiritually dead.
- Through His life, Jesus demonstrated the power and beauty of a righteous life in which the physical and spiritual are interconnected.
- By His death and resurrection, Christ makes it possible – by His grace and through our faith – that any human may be born again and also live such that the physical and spiritual are interconnected!

B.) To Connect **Being** and **Doing**

- Similarly, Jesus in the flesh lived a life in which He simultaneously was righteous and practiced righteousness!
- **In the same way, through His grace and our faith, we are not only to be righteous, but to do righteousness in every area of our lives and at all times!**
- Again, we'll get into this much more next week.

IN A NUTSHELL (over a roasting fire):

The people who will most understand, experience and benefit from the full meaning of Christmas will be those who know and feel that there is something in them that needs to be destroyed – and call upon Jesus to do just that! It's not possible to genuinely celebrate Christmas and harbor sin.

VIDEO: “It's About The Cross – Go Fish”, video by hmearing (YouTube)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tNyKzIABfk&feature=Playlist&p=F561B2203FFA53C7&index=4>