

Why Christmas? Hebrews 2:10-18

Why Christmas? Why did God send His Son Jesus into the world? It is one of the most important questions we will ever answer. It is a question that people have pondered and even struggled with over the centuries since love came down at Christmas so long ago in the little town of Bethlehem. Even in those days few people understood the significance of the event. Here is how St Mathew described it: *Mathew 2:3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.* Little has changed in two thousand years for we still have detractors and doubters who like Herod are troubled when they hear the Gospel proclaimed. Refusing to admit the universal human need for a savior they will do everything in their power to remove Christ from their Christmas as well as the Christmas of everyone else. Even though society has moved from the industrial revolution to the information age hearing the good news of Jesus Christ and believing and understanding it remain two very different things.

So why did God send His Son into the world? It is a serious question that demands careful consideration. Anytime we seek to answer a question like that, one that affects our understanding of God, we can't rely upon our own intellect. We must turn to a higher authority to help us discover the truth. The Epistle to the Hebrews is one of those authorities, for that book along with the other 65 contained in our Bible is God's revealed word to us. From beginning to end, the Scriptures expose the need for the coming of Christ, and it tells us all we need to know to understand why it happened as it did.

If we look carefully, we will find that the writer of Hebrews in chapter 2:10-18 reveals at least three reasons for the birth of Christ. The first is found in verse 10. This single verse could easily provide the foundation for a whole series of messages about the character and nature of God, but I want us to look at just a small part of it this morning as we seek to the answer to our question.

The key phrase is found near the end of the verse, where the writer said that God will make the founder of their salvation perfect through sufferings. The “their” there refers to the “sons of glory”, or as the NIV translation renders it sons and daughters of glory. The point is that **Jesus came to earth to suffer so that He and His children would be glorified.** Not a pleasant thought, but one that we must never forget. Jesus came to earth suffer so we don’t have to. That word founder brings to mind a trailblazer or a leader, a pioneer, someone who goes first and plots a path for others to follow through unexplored territory. A secular example might be Christopher Columbus, or Lewis and Clark. We might also remember Martin Luther, as he was the first to challenge church leaders of his age to make the Bible accessible to all, not just the elite of society. Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King were founders of the civil rights movement as they boldly asserted that all people are created equal by God. Like Jesus Christ, both lost their lives because of their teaching. Like Jesus perhaps even they were made perfect through suffering.

You might be wondering who the sons and daughters of glory are, especially in light of the fact that Jesus never married or had children. The answer is found in the Gospel of John, verse 1:12-13. The sons and daughters of glory are the children of God, born again believers who trust Jesus for their salvation.

Jesus Christ was a pioneer, but with a mission much more important than any other. God sent Him into the world to mark the path of our salvation, without which we would be lost in our sins and transgressions. Jesus Christ is the captain of our salvation, which brings to mind the leader of a great army, or the pilot of a ship or aircraft. He leads His army of followers into victory over the enemy and sets the course for the great ship of Zion towards heaven and steers the vessel safely into port. Why did God send His Son Jesus into the world? He came to lead, to guide and to secure a place in eternity for His children with God the Father. **He came to save us from our sins.**

Another reason He came is found in verse 11. Jesus Christ came to sanctify us. Sanctification was a common theme of many of John Wesley's sermons, and it is a fancy theological term for the process in which we are being made holy. In simple terms, holiness is being purified from sin and set apart for service to God. A perfect and holy God can have nothing less than perfect and holy people in His presence. The writer of Hebrews tells us that in chapter 12 verse 14- "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord". Why did God send His Son into the world? **He sent Jesus to make us holy so that we can see God in glory one day.**

Holiness and serving God does require some willingness and cooperation on our part. Holiness begins and is made complete through our faith in Christ. Holiness and life itself are a series of choices and decisions, some easy and some much more difficult. God has given us the ability to reason and to make decisions based upon the information and choices that we have before us. For example, when we eat at a new restaurant for the first time, we will carefully look at the menu and consider all of the options in front of us before we decide. People looking for a church might visit several before choosing one that best connects them with Jesus. People considering marriage might carefully consider the character and lifestyle of the person we are attracted to before promising to spend a lifetime with them.

It's been said that you can choose your friends, but you can't pick your family. That might sound like a reasonable statement, but it is not entirely true. You can choose to become a child of God and consider Jesus Christ your brother. One of the most powerful truths in all of Scripture is found in **2:11-12**. Jesus is not ashamed to call His true followers His brothers and sisters. In fact, he boldly invites all of humanity to become part of His holy family. **Matthew 11:28**. Nothing in our past can prevent us from being extended the invitation. Jesus will never make one of those "I remember you when" statements that can make us blush at family reunions. He declares to God the Father that we are of the same family, sanctified and made holy through Him.

Jesus came to suffer and be our salvation. Jesus came to make us holy. **And 2:17 teaches that He also came to be like us.** That might sound somewhat strange as we usually believe quite the opposite- that we are to be like Him. The truth is that Jesus had to know what it was like to be human in order to help us in our own struggles. Unlike an inconsiderate supervisor Jesus will never ask us to do something unpleasant that He does not want to do Himself or has not already done. He sacrificed His position of power and prestige to be like us.

Why Christmas? Why did Jesus come? The answers are many, but the three we have looked at this morning are some of the most important. He came to save, to sanctify and to sacrifice. In a word he came to love us. As the old song goes love came down at Christmas.

As we enter the New Year, let us make it our mission to proclaim that good news, the truth, even to those who may refuse would listen. Let us do it with conviction, passion, and confidence, knowing that we are brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as sons and daughters of God the Father, in whom we place our faith and trust forever, Amen.