



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The End of the Story

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GALATIANS 4:4-5

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Christmas has certainly become a big deal in our country. From the craze of Black Friday shopping to all the decorations adorning homes and businesses to the seemingly endless array of parties and activities we clearly see that the holiday season is a significant time for most people.

However, in the midst of all the busyness, many lament the loss of “the real meaning of Christmas”. “Jesus is the reason for the season” is the reminder we often hear to draw us back to the truth that Christmas is about how God sent His Son into the world.

Just as we are tempted to miss the point that “Jesus is the reason for the season”, we can miss the fact that Jesus is the reason for the whole Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. This has been the theme of our studies at the capitol this year. We have seen how the entirety of scripture is telling the story of God’s redemption of sinful people through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. We looked at how Jesus pointed this out to His disciples after His resurrection:

²⁵And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

²⁶“Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?”²⁷And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

⁴⁴ Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”⁴⁵Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day;⁴⁷and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸“You are witnesses of these things. Luke 24:25-27; 44-48

Here we see that Jesus points to all the parts of the Old Testament: the Law, the prophets, and the Psalms and clearly says, “***These things were written about Me***”. We have seen in our studies this year how the events and accounts of the Old Testament all point to what Jesus would do for us on the cross. If indeed the work of Jesus is the central theme or story of the whole Bible, then in a sense we can say that the true message of Christmas is “***The End of the Story***”. By “end” we not only mean the completion or climax, but the point and purpose of the story as well. Let us consider a passage that describes for us how Jesus’ coming at Christmas is the “end of the story”:

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Galatians 4:4-5

This passage is found in Paul’s letter to the church in Galatia. It was written to people who were turning to the keeping of the law as the means of becoming and remaining right with God. In our terms it would refer to those of us who depend upon being good people and doing religious or spiritual things in order to be right with God and go to heaven. Paul writes to these people and reminds them that the only way to be right with God is through faith in Christ alone.

THE FULLNESS OF TIME

Jesus Christ came to earth at just the right time in keeping with God’s sovereign plan. He came in fulfillment of many prophecies that were given regarding his birth. He came as the fulfillment of all those Old Testament accounts and descriptions we have studied in our sessions this year: the law, the sacrifices, the tabernacle, et al.¹

Looking back, we can clearly see how the time was right for God to send His Son. ***The time was right religiously***. At this point Israel was no longer an idolatrous people. The books of the Old Testament had been gathered so that the people had access to the Scriptures. Synagogues had been established throughout that part of the world and it was

INTERIM BIBLE STUDY

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 12:00 NOON

TREASURER’S CONFERENCE ROOM (EB 54)

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through these that the good news of the gospel originally spread. ***The time was right culturally.*** That part of the world had become Greek culturally, and Greek was the common language. This made it easy for the Gospel to spread without the barrier of languages. ***The time was right politically.*** Rome had taken over the world and established the *Pax Romana*, or, “Roman Peace”. This, along with the wonderful system of roads built by Rome allowed for the free movement of the gospel. Indeed this was “the fullness of time”, the right time for God to send His Son.

GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON

This is one of the amazing, incomprehensible truths of Christmas. This is a grand truth worthy of all the hoopla we make of the holiday season (though many miss or neglect this truth). God the Father, sent God the Son to earth. John wrote of how “***The Word became flesh and dwelt among us...***” (John 1:14). Matthew, quoting a prophesy in Isaiah 9 recorded: “***The virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, with translated means, ‘God with us’***” (Matt. 1:23). Of this amazing truth Spurgeon writes,

“It is quite certain that Christ is God, for here He is called, ‘His Son’. Jesus existed before He was born into this world, for God ‘sent’ His Son! He was already existing or He could not have been ‘sent’. And while He is One with the Father, yet He must be distinct from the Father and have a personality separate from that of the Father-otherwise it could not be said that God sent His Son?”²

BORN OF A WOMAN

If the fact that God sent His Son to earth is not enough to blow our minds, here is the other unfathomable truth of Christmas: God the Son came to earth in the form of a person, a little baby no less. The baby lying in the manger was both God and man. This is what Paul is saying when he writes of Jesus, “***...Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.***”

(Philippians 2:6-7). That Jesus was both God and man is essential for Him to fulfill the task for which His Father sent Him:

“First of all, He had to be God in order to give His sacrifice infinite value. In order to have the power to deliver us out of the realm of darkness, in order to have the power to smash Satan, in order to have the power to dominate death and bring us to God’s Kingdom, He had to be God. He also had to be man. You see, He had to be man because it was man who sinned and it was man who had to pay. It was man who had to render his life to God as a sacrifice. It was man who had to satisfy the penalty, so He had to be man. I’ll put it this way. He had to be God to have the power of salvation, but He had to be man to have the privilege of substitution.” John MacArthur³

BORN UNDER THE LAW

This is an aspect of Jesus’ life that we often overlook. As a man He was responsible to keep the law God has given. He kept this law perfectly. This is why as a perfect sacrifice He could be offered on our behalf. This is also why His righteous (His perfectness or goodness) can be credited to us when we place our trust in Him. So not only did Jesus have to be God, and have to be man, He also had to be righteous.

THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM THOSE WHO WERE UNDER THE LAW

God sent His Son to redeem those who have broken God’s laws which includes each and every one of us. We are all responsible to keep God’s laws. Yet every one of us has lied, been angry with others, had lustful thoughts, or simply failed to love God with all our hearts or our neighbors as ourselves. Consequently, we are under the punishment required for breaking God’s law. The story of the Bible that finds its end in the Christmas message is that God sent His Son to redeem us from the punishment for sin. Though He kept God’s law, He took the punishment for our breaking of God’s law upon Himself when He suffered and died on the cross.

The word redeemed is a great picture of our salvation. It speaks of one going into the slave market, purchasing a slave on the auction block, then taking him out and setting him free.

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That is the picture of what God has done for us through Christ; He bought us out of sin and freed us from its penalty and power. That is why Peter writes of the redemption we have through Christ:

... You were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 1 Peter 1:18-19

THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE ADOPTION AS SONS

Not only are we redeemed from sin when we repent and trust Christ. We who are alienated and separated from God because of sin can be forgiven and become God's children because of what Christ has done for us. Indeed, the Apostle John exclaims:

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God... 1 John 3:1

We can have the joy and assurance of knowing that we are God's children with all the blessing that includes.

THE END OF THE STORY

As we consider the account of Christmas we realize the story does go on to include the life and ministry of Jesus as well as His death and resurrection. The story continues as we read of His exaltation:

God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11.

We know that the story ultimately concludes when Jesus comes again to rule over all things (Revelation 21).

So the Christmas message is not the end of the story chronologically, but it is the end of the story as we speak of the purpose or the point. In this series of studies we have shown how the key to understanding the Bible is to realize that Jesus - His perfect life, His suffering and death on the cross for the redemption of fallen people, and His resurrection - is the central theme or story of the whole Bible. This story culminated when "*God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*"

In the busyness of this Christmas season, be sure to stop and consider these amazing truths. God the Father sent His Son in human form in order to redeem us and forgive our sin.

- **IF YOU HAVE NOT TRUSTED CHRIST, CONSIDER TURNING FROM SIN AND TRUSTING HIM.**
- **IF WE ARE TRUSTING CHRIST, LET US CONTEMPLATE THESE TRUTHS IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT BE OVERWHELMED ANEW BY GOD'S AMAZING GRACE AND GROW IN OUR LOVE AND APPRECIATION FOR ALL HE HAS DONE FOR US.**
- **WHENEVER YOU READ THE BIBLE, MAKE SURE YOU DO SO WITH THE THEME OR THE "END OF THE STORY" IN MIND.**

¹ You can find our entire series of this year's Bible studies at <http://capitolcom.org/west-virginia/studies>

² Spurgeon, C.H. The Great Birthday and Our Coming of Age. Sermon #1815. www.spurgeongems.org.

³ MacArthur, John. *Sons of God*. Sermon from April 28, 1974. www.gty.org.