

## CHRISTMAS - A MESSAGE FROM JOHN

### INTRODUCTION

- A. The story of Jesus in the Gospels
1. Matthew and Luke introduce Jesus in the context of His earthly family.
  2. Mark introduce Jesus through John the Baptist, the one who would come before Jesus.
  3. John introduces Jesus in the context of His heavenly family.
- B. Notes on John
1. He is the disciple Jesus loved, John 13:23, *One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side,*
  2. He is the disciple Jesus assigned to care for His mother, John 19:26-27, *When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.*
  3. He is the disciple who gave the purpose for which the Gospel of John was written, John 20:30-31, *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*
- C. Why didn't John include the Christmas story?
1. He did but I believe it is the back-story of Christmas.
  2. He gives more details that define why the Christmas story is so important.
  3. We might want to identify John's version of Christmas as the Incarnation Story.
    - a. The word incarnation comes from Latin, meaning *in the flesh*.
    - b. He takes the Christmas story back in time before Bethlehem and to before time began.
  4. Three things are needed for incarnation and all are explained by John in chapter 1 of the Gospel of John.
    - a. God chose to enter His creation.
    - b. How God chose to enter His creation.
    - c. Why God chose to enter His creation.

### CHRISTMAS IS INCARNATION

- A. God chose to enter His creation out of love, John 3:16, *For God so loved the world. . .*
1. He did it because He loves you, 1 John 4:10, *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us. . .*
  2. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Out of love for human beings, God becomes a human being.*
  3. God does not need us He wants us!
- B. God chose to enter His creation by sending His Son , John 1:1-3, 14, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
1. God the Father sent God the Son.
    - a. The Word is identified as the Son in John 1:14.
    - b. He always existed with the Father.
    - c. He created all things.
  2. God sent the Son to earth by placing His divine nature into humanity.
    - a. The Son took the name of Jesus, Matthew 1:21, *She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. . .*
    - b. The baby Jesus in the manger existed before His birth in Bethlehem.
      - 1) He is God the son, one person with two natures, human and divine.
      - 2) Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The child in the manger is none other than God himself. Nothing greater can be said: God became a child. In the Jesus child of Mary lives the almighty God.*
    - c. Jesus knows Who He is and so should we.
      - 1) John 10:30, *I and the Father are one.*
      - 2) John 8:58, *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."*

- d. The baby in the manger is so much more!
    - 1) Jesus was born in a manger but He existed before Abraham.
    - 2) Jesus is God but He was the son of Mary.
    - 3) Jesus died on the cross but He is the resurrection and the life.
    - 4) Jesus does not need us but He wants us!
  - e. Why is it so important that Jesus is not just human but also divine?
    - 1) Who Jesus is determines what He can do.
    - 2) We will see that in why He came in verse 12.
- C. God chose to enter His creation to save it, John 1:12, *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,*
1. Many misunderstand Jesus' reason for coming to earth.
    - a. Some believe He was a religious fanatic confused by His zeal.
    - b. Some believe He was a good man who is an example of how we should live.
    - c. Christians believe He is God the Son Who came to save us from our sins.
      - 1) Let's complete Matthew 1:21, *She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*
      - 2) Jesus came to save us from ourselves who are separated from God by choice.
      - 3) John 14:6, *...I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*
      - 4) Note Pew Research Center, *66% of people who consider themselves Christians believe there are multiple paths to heaven.*
  2. Jesus came to be the Savior of the world.
    - a. Galatians 4:4-5, *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.*
    - b. Anonymous, *He came to pay a debt He didn't owe because we owed a debt we couldn't pay.*
    - c. Dietrich Bonhoeffer . . . *it is the Christ child in the manger himself who holds world judgment and world redemption. He pushes back the high and mighty; he overturns the thrones of the powerful; he humbles the haughty; his arm exercises power over all the high and mighty; he lifts what is lowly, and makes it great and glorious in his mercy.*
  3. It was a costly calling.
    - a. A view of the cross paints a painful picture of what Jesus endured for you and me.
    - b. Below the surface, there was pain much deeper than the physical torture Jesus endured.
    - c. The deepest pain was the spiritual break in fellowship between the Father and the Son.
      - 1) Jesus cried out in deep agony, Mark 15:34, *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*
      - 2) For the only time, past, present or future, the Father turned from the Son, eternal fellowship was broken because Jesus became sin for you and for me.
    - d. The most wondrous thing took place a few moments later when fellowship was restored.
      - 1) Jesus proclaimed, John 19:30, *... "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*
      - 2) His payment for sin was accepted by the Father and forgiveness of sins is available based on Jesus' work.
      - 3) As noted earlier, the sinless One became sin for you and for me.
      - 4) J. I. Packer, *The Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity—hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory—because at the Father's will Jesus Christ became poor, and was born in a stable so that thirty years later He might hang on a cross.*

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
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- A. How must we respond to the incarnation?
1. Receive the gift of Christmas by faith alone in the person and work of Jesus Christ, John 3:16, *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*
  2. Obey Him from a heart of thanksgiving for Who He is and what He has done, 1 John 5:3, *For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.*
  3. Love others empowered by His love us, 1 John 4:12, *...if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.*

B. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Christmas prayer in his prison cell before he was executed in Germany, 1944.

*Close to you I waken in the dead of night,  
And start with fear—are you lost to me once more?  
Is it always vainly that I seek you, you, my past?  
I stretch my hands out,  
and I pray—  
and a new thing now I hear;*

*“The past will come to you once more,  
and be your life’s enduring part,  
through thanks and repentance.  
Feel in the past God’s deliverance and goodness,  
Pray him to keep you today and tomorrow.”*

Shortly thereafter, he was in the presence of his Savior!

C. James Kennedy, *The great tragedy of the Christmas holiday is not so much its commercialization ..., but its trivialization. How tragic it is that people have forgotten Him to Whom they owe so very much.*