

The Gospel of John

The Perfect Gift from God

John 16:20, 28-33

INTRODUCTION:

When the world considers the celebration of Christmas they think of Christmas trees filled with ornaments and lights, gifts and toys under the tree, the mistletoe, Santa Claus finding out who is naughty and nice, frosty the snowman, Jack Frost nipping at your nose, chestnuts roasting on an open fire, Santa's sleigh, Rudolph the red nosed reindeer, outdoor decorations and lights, Black Friday, and the list goes on and on.

As Christians, many people think that the Christmas story is only found in the Gospel accounts from Matthew and Luke. They reflect on all the traditional images of Christmas including Joseph and the virgin Mary, Bethlehem, an innkeeper, Jesus being born in a manger, sheep, shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night, angels, the wise men, the star of the East, and King Herod.

This is the traditional message that many churches will be preaching today. And it is a wonderful story that everyone needs to hear.

But what many people do not consider is that John's Gospel holds a Christmas story as well. John's gospel approaches the story differently. We find in John no mention of a travel weary young family, an innkeeper with no room in the inn, a manger, angels, shepherds, or wise men.

Instead of providing the historical details of Jesus' birth, John provides the **true** meaning of the Christmas story. This is why I love John's account of Christmas.

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 16:20, 28-33 (NASB)

²⁰ Truly, truly I say to you that you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy! ... ²⁸ I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

²⁹ His disciples *said, "See, now You are speaking plainly and are not using any figure of speech. ³⁰ Now we know that You know all things, and *that* You have no need for anyone to question You; this is why we believe that You came forth from God." ³¹ Jesus replied to them, "Do you now believe? ³² Behold, an hour is coming, and has *already* come, for you to be scattered, each to his own *home*, and to leave Me alone; and *yet* I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. ³³ These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Prayer

What does John's Christmas story tell us?

John tells us that Christmas is about God becoming flesh and blood in the Person of Jesus Christ. God stepped into human history by allowing Jesus to be born as a human; to walk among us and teach us the truth of God; and rescue us from sin and death by dying on the cross.

We read the "**Christmas Story**" concerning the birth of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Although you will not find that narrative in the Gospel of **John**, you **will** find the reason we celebrate His birth. It is because He is the prophesied Messiah from the Old Testament who had a **purpose for His coming**. That was to provide the **Perfect Christmas gift to you! That perfect gift is the gift of salvation.**

This was the "**joy**" that was promised to the disciples that night just before Jesus went into the Garden to pray.

John 16:20 (NASB)

20 Truly, truly I say to you that you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy!

The disciples were totally exhausted from weeping and mourning. All they could think about at this time was that Jesus was leaving them. The world, including the Jewish leaders, who were under the influence of Satan were rejoicing that they had, in their own minds, eliminated the ultimate blasphemer: Jesus, Who claimed to be God.

The disciples grief did turn into joy when Jesus appeared before them after His resurrection as He showed them the scars on His hands and feet. Their joy continued to grow as they began to understand more and more the significance of His death through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

BODY:

I. I CAME INTO THE WORLD FROM THE FATHER.

John 16:28a (NASB)

28 I came forth from the Father and have come into the world;...

Perhaps the most important truth that John provides concerning Christmas is found in John 1:14. In this verse, John goes back to verse 1 to pick up on one of his favorite themes, **the Word**.

John 1:14 (NASB)

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

God became flesh and blood and lived among us. The infinite became finite. Eternity entered into time. The invisible became visible. The Creator entered His own creation. Although God became fully man through the person of Jesus, Jesus remained fully God.

But the purpose of the incarnation was not just to experience life in human form, to taste food, or to feel sorrow. The Son of God came in the flesh in order to be the Savior of mankind.

First, it was necessary to be born “under the law”.

Galatians 4:4-5 (NASB)

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

All of us have failed to fulfill God’s Law. We are all sinners. Christ came in the flesh, under the Law, to fulfill the Law on our behalf.

Second, it was necessary for the Savior to shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 10:11-13 (NASB)

¹¹ Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.

A blood sacrifice, of course, requires a body of flesh and blood. This is referred to as incarnation. God planned that Christ would come to this earth in the form of flesh and blood for that very reason. Without the incarnation, Christ could not really die, and the cross would be meaningless.

The cross is also meaningless for those who are not willing to hear the truth proclaimed by Christ and **believe**.

John 16:29-30 (NASB)

²⁹ His disciples *said, “See, now You are speaking plainly and are not using any figure of speech. ³⁰ Now we know that You know all things, and *that* You have no need for anyone to question You; **this is why we believe that You came forth from God.**”

The core **truth** of Christmas is that God came and dwelt among us. The very God who gave us life came and became one of us.

John 14:23-24 (NASB)

²³ ... “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. ²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.

What should this tell us?

It should tell us that God is concerned about the human race. God is a loving and caring God who was not willing to leave humanity as it is, but desires to save it. In order for Jesus to accomplish God's plan for salvation, He had to leave the disciples by dying on the cross.

II. I AM LEAVING THE WORLD TO RETURN TO THE FATHER.

John 16:28b (NASB)

²⁸ ...again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”

Jesus has been talking now for a very long time about dying to His disciples. You have to understand that before Jesus came into their lives, they had been taught by the Jewish leaders that the Messiah would establish His kingdom on earth, reign in Jerusalem,

destroy their enemies, and bring salvation to Israel. But He began talking in detail about dying. He told them He would be arrested, He would be beaten, He would be spit on, and even lifted up on a cross and be crucified. He also told them He would rise again. But they just could not understand because it was not meeting their expectations of what was to happen.

As a result of this, the closer they got to the actual time of the cross, the deeper their sorrow and confusion grew. Now they are within a couple of hours, at the most, from His arrest in the garden. And immediately after that, the mock trial in the darkness of the morning, and then His crucifixion on Friday. Their sorrow and confusion was now at the ultimate level. It has become very real to them that Jesus is actually going to die.

Jesus tells them "**I am leaving the world and going to the Father.**" He has successfully lived on this earth without sinning and accomplished the will of the Father to die on the cross for our salvation. He was finally leaving this sin-cursed earth to receive the glory from His Father that He deserved. But because of their grief and lack of understanding, they could not even respond by saying, "We are really happy for you."

So as that night draws to a close and Jesus knows what He is about to have to endure, He still has a burden in His heart for His disciples. He has told them everything they need to know. They cannot process it, so they are engulfed in sorrow. And here we see a most amazing illustration of the sympathy and compassion of our Lord, who wants to give **joy** to these men in the midst of their sorrow.

John 16:31 (NASB)

³¹ Jesus replied to them, "**Do you now believe?**"

There is no question mark in the Greek language. This may have been a question, but it could also be a statement affirming that "Yes, you are believing". They are absolutely right. He did come down from heaven. He was going to do His work and go back to where He had come from. They did believe the right thing. They believed He was God in the world.

So, for the moment, you are believing. But that is not where the chapter ends.

John 16:32 (NASB)

³² Behold, an hour is coming, and has *already* come, for you to be scattered, each to his own *home*, and to leave Me alone; and *yet* I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

There is another hour coming when they will run. When was that? Just maybe a couple hours from this statement? They go into the garden, Jesus is arrested, **and they flee.**

Was their faith a sham? No. It was weak faith. It was very important for Jesus to say that, so that when they did scatter, they would say, "Oh, that is exactly what He said we would do." Which again affirms the fact – listen – that He knew they were true believers, and they were loved by the Father, even though their faith was weak.

The apostle Paul said, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful." Look, we would like to believe that our faith is fully mature, right? That no matter what trial comes along, whatever issue comes into your life, your faith is mature enough to rest completely, confidently in God. But understand, these are very, very young people in the faith. Peter thought he was a rock, but they were all just a bunch of pebbles. And they started running...fast!

Does this mean their faith was not real? No. It just means that it was immature. They did believe, and they believed the right thing, but they overestimated the strength of their faith. Their faith was real, and it was tested.

Jesus knew all about their weaknesses, and He knows about ours too. Many times in life we will not understand what is going on. Other times we will not know what to do. But the Lord knows all about us, and we can trust Him to help us even when we do not understand.

You may have times in your life when man will fail you. Try as we may, we will not always meet the needs or expectations of those you are around. But you cannot live without a deliverer or somebody to rescue you from the corruption of the world, somebody to overcome the issues of your life. If you put your trust in God, you have the promise that God will hold onto you even when your faith is weak. He will not fail you.

III. I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD.

John 16:33a (NASB)

³³ These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace...

The peace that Jesus leaves us is not worldly peace.

John 14:27 (NASB)

²⁷ Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful.

Our peace comes from trusting Jesus. We may not understand exactly how salvation works. But if we believe Christ, we will not longer fear death. Death will be the stepping stone to something much greater.

John 16:33b (NASB)

*...In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; **I have overcome the world.**"*

By dying on the cross, Jesus became the perfect sacrifice. It was because He had lived a sinless life on earth and had flawlessly accomplished the will of His Father. When He died, He paid the full price for our sins. Our sins were taken away even before we committed them and replaced with His righteousness. That is a gift from God, through His Son, that allows us to stand before God on Judgment Day as if we had never sinned.

God's gift of salvation is a blessing from God that we do not deserve. We call it **grace!** Nothing within us says, "I am worthy of God's love and mercy ." Rather, God gives us something that we do not deserve through His Son: becoming a child of God and salvation.

John 1:9-13 (NASB)

⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

*¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

God loved us so much that He allowed Jesus to die on the cross for our sins and give us salvation. A salvation that grants us the privilege to live with Him for eternity if we but believe in His Son and practice the truth.

John 3:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

God did His part by sacrificing His own Son on the cross for us. This act of love only has value for those who are willing to surrender their lives over completely to Christ. In order to receive His gift of salvation you must love God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind, and all your strength.

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

CONCLUSION:

The real Christmas story is the story of God becoming a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ.

God did an incredible work in sending His only begotten Son into the world and providing us with a salvation we do not deserve. Praise the Lord for that moment in which “the Word became flesh.”

We are now redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

1 Peter 1:18-21 (NASB)

¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. ²⁰ For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you ²¹ who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Why did God do such a thing? Because He loves us!

Why was Christmas necessary? Because we needed a Savior!

Why do we celebrate Christmas each year? Because God loved His own and provided a way—the only Way—for us to spend eternity with Him. He gave His only Son to take our punishment for our sins. He paid the price in full, and we are free from condemnation when we accept that free gift of love.

God left the portals of heaven and dwelled in a physical body among us. He came to save us. He came to love us. He came to show us the truth.

Have a **MERRY CHRISTMAS** by making it **ALL ABOUT JESUS!**

Go Tell it on the Mountain.