

Christmas 2009

Introduction: Around Christmastime there is an awful lot that can draw our attention away from Jesus. There is decorating to do, parties to go to, presents to buy. Santa Claus can almost singlehandedly steal the show. I remember the day well when I first heard that he wasn't real. I was in first or second grade. A few of us were standing around the drinking fountain at Alexander Ave. Elementary School, Old School #10 in Cheektowaga, NY, and the topic of discussion centered on the fat guy in the red suit. We were too short to reach the water and Ronny Dashner was on the stepstool getting a drink, which made seem a good bit him taller than me. From that position of authority, he authoritatively declared, "There is no Santa Claus," and he looked straight at me. I was stunned. The seed of doubt had been planted. Life would never be the same. Christmas would have to take on a whole new meaning if it was ever going to matter at all again. Eventually, for me, Jesus more than filled the gap left by Santa. Christmas is the day that Christians traditionally celebrate the birth of Jesus.

The birth of Jesus matters because Jesus matters.

- I. The Birth of Jesus Christ
- II. The Life of Jesus Christ
- III. The Death of Jesus Christ
- IV. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ
- V. The Return of Jesus Christ

Text: **Matthew 1:18 – 2:12**

- I. The Birth of Jesus Christ
 - A. Virgin Birth: That's how the story started, beginning with **Matt. 1:18**
 - B. Foretold by prophets: Two examples were included in our text pertaining specifically to the birth of Christ, though several more examples of prophecy were given:
 - i. Matt. 1:23 referencing Isaiah 7:14
 - ii. Matt. 2:6 referencing Micah 5:2

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- II. The Life of Jesus Christ
 - A. His Teaching: All the red print in a red-letter edition.
 - B. His Sinless Example

Hebrews 4:14-16 NKJV ¹⁴Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was **in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.** ¹⁶Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

III. The Death of Jesus Christ

A. The Theology of It

Matt 20:28 NKJV "... the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

First Timothy 2:5-6 NKJV For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

i. In what sense did Christ serve as a "ransom"? Definition:

1. (n) ransom, ransom money (money demanded for the return of a captured person)
2. (n) ransom payment for the release of someone
3. (n) ransom the act of freeing from captivity or punishment

(Taken from <http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=ransom>)

ii. He paid for our release from the bondage of our sins.

iii. He freed us from captivity to sin and death and freed us from the punishment we were due as a result of our sins. See **Matt. 1:21**

B. The Love of It

Rom 5:6-8 NKJV ⁶For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1Jn 3:16 NKJV By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

IV. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

A. The Basis of Our Hope

First Peter 1:3-5 NKJV ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

B. A Foreshadowing of Our Future

First Corinthians 15:20-23 NKJV ²⁰But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

C. A Motivation for Our Obedience

Colossians 3:1-4 NKJV ¹If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

V. The Return of Jesus Christ

- A. **Delay:** It will also take longer than expected.
- B. **Imminence:** It is liable to happen soon.
- C. **Uncertainty:** We don't know when it will happen.
 - Read the Parable of the Ten Virgins, **Matt. 25:1-13.**

Conclusion:

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At this time when people often think about gifts, let's consider some gifts that only God can give:

John 3:16-17 NKJV ¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Rom 6:23 NKJV ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 2:8-10 NKJV ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

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