



Why is Christmas Important?
Hebrews 10:26-31
GCSP – 12/26/2009

Let's pray.

I would have to guess that most people in the United States have at least a basic understanding of the Christmas story; they may have several of the facts wrong and I am sure there are some who haven't a clue, but most have heard the account of the birth of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, most who have heard the account view it as a cute story or a religious fable; lining it up somewhere between Grimm's Fairy Tales and Greek Mythology.

But for most of those who have heard the Biblical account, and believe it to be true to one extent or another, are probably not completely sure as to why Jesus had to be born into this world as a baby or why it is so important.

God in three persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, is an infinite being. He has no beginning and He has no end. God is infinite in wisdom and power, is matchless in love and mercy, and is perfect in His divine providence. Before the creation of this universe and before the creation of mankind, and even before the creation of the angels of heaven, He knew that what we know as the Christmas account would be necessary.

We are not given the specifics of how and when God created the angels but we know it was before mankind. The Bible tells us that the angelic host is vast in number, most likely outnumbering human beings by quite a large margin; and I think there are between six and seven billion of us on the planet right now.

When God created the angels they were created in glorious beauty with magnificent strength and supernatural powers. The only three angels named in the Bible are Gabriel, Michael, and Lucifer. There is at least a slight indication in Scripture that these three have charge over one-third of the other angels – but this is speculation to some extent. Of the three, the Bible says that Lucifer was the most magnificent; none of the other angels surpassed him in beauty.

But God did not create the angels to be puppets on a string. So at some point prior to the creation of the earth and of mankind, Lucifer succumbed to the great sin of pride and determined that he did not want to be under God's rule and authority. As a matter of fact, Lucifer determined in his heart that he would ascend to the throne and be God.

This obviously was not possible and God would not stand for any kind of rebellion of this sort, so He threw Lucifer out of heaven and Scripture says one-third of the angels were thrown out with him. We have to assume that these angels also sinned against God but the account does not indicate the details.

Lucifer is now more commonly called Satan, the devil, the prince of the power of the air, the wolf in sheep's clothing, the father of lies, the accuser of the brethren, the enemy,

the thief who seeks to steal, kill, and destroy, the adversary, the dragon, and many other names. All the angels that were thrown out of heaven with him are now more commonly called demons and evil spirits among a handful of other names.

At some point after these angels allowed their pride to bring them into rebellion against God, and thus be banished from heaven and condemned forever, God created the earth and created mankind in the persons of Adam and Eve.

For a period of time Adam and Eve lived a sinless life in an amazing atmosphere. They had intimate fellowship with God. They experienced no pain, no sickness, no disease, and no death. They were both perfect in every way and could have lived eternally in this perfection. But God also did not create mankind as puppets on a string. He gave mankind the freedom of choice; the choice to obey His commands or the choice to disobey.

In the course of time, the very same sin that saw Lucifer become Satan got the better of Adam and Eve. The pride of making their own choices, the pride of determining they knew better than God and thus desired to be God, caused them to lose perfection. And as Lucifer was banished from heaven, Adam and Eve were banished from their perfect environment.

The sin of pride put Adam and Eve, and thus all of mankind that would eventually descend from them, on the road to the same eternal damnation and punishment that Satan and his demons have to look forward to.

Romans 3:10 says, "There is none righteous, not even one." **Romans 3:23** says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." And the beginning of **Romans 6:23** says, "For the wages of sin is death..."

The truth you need to grasp tonight is that sin separates you from God. The holy and righteous and perfect and divine God of the universe cannot allow sin, and thus sinners, into His heaven. Sin destroyed God's perfect design for His creation. All of mankind was now destined to eternal damnation with no hope of ever achieving the perfection required to gain heaven.

Romans 5:12 says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." Eternal death is the consequence for sin; any sin. And eternal death means eternal punishment and eternal separation from God.

"But God..."

God knew all of this before He even created the angels, before He even created the earth, and before He even created mankind. He knew sin would come into the picture. He knew the pride of desiring to be our own god, making our own rules, and living according to our own laws while thumbing our noses at His Laws and commands, would rule the day. God knew all of this and He knew that mankind was destined to join Satan and his demons in the Lake of Fire at the end of the age.

"But God..."

Romans 5:8 says, "**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**"

God knew all of this in eternity past. God knew sin would infect each and every one of us. But unlike Satan and his demons, God loved us with such an everlasting love that He provided a way for us to be reconciled to Him. He provided the payment required to satisfy the un-payable debt we owed.

So what had to happen before Christ could die for us? – He had to be born into this world. He had to live a perfectly sinless life. He had to choose to obey the Father. He had to willingly go to the Cross of Calvary and suffer an inhumane beating and death; for the Bible clearly tells us that there is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood. And Jesus had to rise from the dead to claim the victory over sin and death.

Earlier I read the beginning of Romans 6:23; here is how that verse ends: "...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." So even though the wages of sin is death, Jesus experienced that death in our place. Now all we have to do is repent of our sin, meaning turn away from our life of disobedience to God and His holy Word, and accept His free gift of eternal life.

Each one of us has the choice of living according to our own pride, choosing damnation, and spending eternity in hell with Satan and his demons, or, we can live according to God's way, allowing Jesus to pay the penalty for our sin, choosing salvation, and spending eternity in heaven with God and His saints and His angels.

And God gives you the choice. But don't linger over that choice too long.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Hebrews**.

Hebrews 10:26-31

Beloved, this passage tells us that once we have the knowledge of the truth, and every one of you in here tonight now has the knowledge of the truth, if you choose to deny this truth you are trampling under your feet the Son of God; you are in essence spitting in the face of God and telling Him that the sacrifice of His Son for you is not worthy of your attention. And beloved, if you are in that camp tonight, you are now the object of God's vengeance; you are standing before the Judge of the universe, and you are in the terrifying position of being in the hands of the living God.

And all of this is so very unnecessary because God loves you so much that He did send His only Son to be born of a virgin some two-thousand years ago. He did send His Son to die on the Cross in your place, and He is offering you the free gift of salvation right here and right now.

And allow me to add once again that salvation is not something you obtain by merely praying a simple prayer or walking down an aisle at church. Salvation comes through repentance of your sins; from turning away from your old way of life and turning to

allegiance and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. As I have said on numerous occasions, you cannot have Jesus as your Savior if you do not also have Him as your Lord and Master. Jesus is not a fire escape from hell. Genuine salvation is a life of obedience to His Word, not a momentary acknowledgement of your need for a Savior.

Don't put this decision off. If the Holy Spirit is prompting you right now then you need to respond right now. The Bible says, "**Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart. Today is the day of salvation.**"

Let's pray.