

Epic: Life of Christ

Rom 5; I trust you had a good Thanksgiving with friends and family, and that you truly counted your blessings; Even naming them one by one

We've been working our way through an overview of the Bible the past few months, intended to refresh your memory about all that's *happened* . . .
In this epic work of redemption, and your *love* for the one who did it (**Review**)
And so far, we've covered 13 of the 17 time periods, from Creation to the Silent Years

- Which brings us to the NT, and the focal point of it all; The reason all the other time periods even matter
It's like those stone arches you see from time to time, especially in ancient cities, with a *keystone* at the top
It's not only the *pinnacle* of the arch, but the piece that holds it all together
So much so, that if you leave it out, the arch ceases to be an arch

And the same is true of this next time period
Everything in God's epic work of redemption points toward it, and everything opens up from it; In fact, without it, the rest is just history, and the epic ceases to be an epic

I'm referring of course, to the . . .

Life of Christ

(Time Period – c.5BC-30AD)

Key People – Mary, Joseph, John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter, Judas

Key Places – Galilee, Samaria, Jerusalem

Main Events – Birth, Ministry, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus)

Which began around 5BC – the result of a miscalculation in the calendar, centuries after the fact; And with Christmas upon us, it's not a bad time to *review* the facts

The first of which, is that he was originally known as Jesus; *You shall call his name Jesus* the angel said in Mt 1:21

But over time, he also became known as Christ, or Jesus Christ; "Christ" meaning messiah, and referring to a promised savior or liberator; It was a title
And since Jesus was the one, since he *is* the Christ, the messiah – the title became his name; Shortened from Jesus *the* Christ, to Jesus Christ, and sometimes just Christ
It's kind of like calling the President of the United States, Mr. President; B/c his position is synonymous with his person

- In any case, Jesus was born to a virgin, in the town of Bethlehem (**Map**), and immediately heralded as a king; Whose kingdom would never end
Which is why Herod the Great, the reigning king, had all the babies in Bethlehem killed – he was trying to protect his throne

But Mary and Joseph *escaped* with Jesus, and fled to **Egypt**; Where they lived until Herod died ~4BC, and then returned to settle near the Sea of Galilee . . .

In a town called **Nazareth**

- But it wasn't until the age of 30 that he started his *formal* ministry, and spent the next 3 years traveling around Israel with his 12 Disciples preaching and teaching . . .
That the kingdom of God was at hand, and urging people to repent and believe*****

But that came to a screeching halt when he was arrested and crucified on a cross

Only to rise again 3 days later, appear to over 500 people with *many proofs* the Bible says, and then ascend back to heaven 40 days after that

Those are the *facts* of Christ's life; Found in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, & Jn

- But it's **God's Purposes** for his life that I want to *focus* on; B/c without them, it's just an amazing story; And the first, was . . .

1. To fulfill his promise of a Savior – Acts 13:23

Just like the Apostle Paul said in **Acts 13:23** – *God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised.*

It wasn't just anybody, he sent a *Savior*; Implying that we're in trouble; That we *need* saving

Just like the presence of an ambulance implies that someone's hurt; Or the presence of a fire truck, that there's a fire; Or the presence of a plumber, that there's a clog

God sent a Savior b/c we're in trouble; In fact, the Bible says we were *born* in trouble – spiritually *dead* in our trespasses and sins (Col 2:13)*****

I hope you've embraced that; I hope you've *admitted* your spiritual deadness; B/c if you're living in denial just b/c you're *physically* alive, you're flirting with disaster
You need a Savior, and God sent one to fulfill his promise

2. To show his love – Rom 5:8

Expressed in sending Jesus to not only take on flesh and *live* among us, but *die* for us

Which is one of the most loving things he could have done; Rom 5:6-8

[6] *For while we [mankind] were still weak [weak in our hope and weak in our suffering], at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—[8] but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners [thoroughly unrighteous], Christ died for us.*

There are all kinds of expressions of love in the course of life, but the *ultimate* one is to lay down your *life* for someone; Especially someone who doesn't deserve it

Which is you and me; We are sinners who don't deserve such love

But God showed it anyway, by sending us his son, the Messiah, to die for us

3. To reconcile us to himself – 1 Pet 3:18

Did you know that your life *starts* in a state of brokenness with God? A broken relationship? It's true; In fact, the Bible says we're *enemies* of God (Rom 5:10)

Fortunately, God's in the business of changing that – of *reconciling* us to himself

1 Pet 3:18 – *Christ also suffered once for sins [in addition to our suffering, he suffered], the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God [that he might reconcile us to himself]*

You are no friend of God if you haven't been reconciled to him, through faith in the life, death, and resurrection of his Son, on your behalf*****

4. To appease his wrath – 1 Jn 4:10

Sin makes God angry – how many times have we seen that?

And his wrath is not appeased/satisfied unless blood is shed; Unless a life is sacrificed
Which is exactly what Jesus did when he died on the cross – he sacrificed his life on our behalf, to appease God’s wrath for our sin

1 John 4:10 – *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* To be the appeasement of his wrath
Think of it – God sacrificed the life of his own Son, to appease his own wrath, for *our* sins; Apart from which is nothing but a fearful expectation of judgment
Which ought to make us run to him; And run to the cross; Over and over again*****

The question is, *have* you? And *do* you?
Have you set aside your self-sufficiency and laid down your pride, to embrace the appeasement of God’s wrath as found in Christ?
And do you *cling* to the old rugged cross in that respect; I hope so
B/c if you don’t, the Bible says in Jn 3:36 that the wrath of God *remains* on you

5th, God’s purpose in Christ was . . .

5. To save us from our sin – Titus 2:14

Titus 2:14 says – [Jesus] *gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness* [all sin]
Redeem was a first century term often used in the context of slavery; And it means rescue, and relieve, and renew – often times at great cost
Like someone would redeem a girl in the throes of sex trafficking – rescuing her and relieving her of the bondage, and renewing her life with purpose and direction

That’s why God sent Christ; That’s why Jesus died – to rescue us from the bondage and slavery of sin, deliver us from the consequences of hell . . .
And renew our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus
All of which we *desperately* need*****

Like the Apostle Paul; Who lamented in Rom 7 that he does what he *doesn’t* want to do, and *doesn’t* do what he *does* want to; And then cried out . . .
Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me [save me] from this body of death [my sins]? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!
That’s who will deliver me Paul exclaimed – it’s God, through Christ
And that’s who will save *us* as well; That’s why he came

6. To forgive our sins – Acts 13:38

Paul says in **Acts 13:38** – *Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man [Jesus] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you*
Through Christ, you can not only be saved from your sins, but *forgiven*; As in relieved of their consequences, never to be remembered, and washed white as snow

And lest you think otherwise, we *need* to be forgiven*****

B/c there is none righteous, no not one God says (Rom 3:10)

All of us have sinned, and all of us need God’s forgiveness; And he sent his Son for that very purpose

➤ A Facebook post about the Grand Jury decision in Ferguson, MO went viral this week, from a guy named **Benjamin Watson**

Pictured here with his family, he’s an NFL player for the New Orleans Saints, and few people have articulated this point *better* in the crucible of such a tense situation

After looking at the situation from a variety of different perspectives, and saying that he’s angry, frustrated, embarrassed, and hopeless – he ended w/ this . . .

“I’M [also] ENCOURAGED, because ultimately the problem is not a SKIN problem, it is a SIN problem. SIN is the reason we rebel against authority. SIN is the reason we abuse our authority. SIN is the reason we are racist, prejudiced and lie to cover for our own. SIN is the reason we riot, loot and burn. BUT I’M ENCOURAGED because God has provided a solution for sin through his son Jesus and with it, a transformed heart and mind.”

Whatever you think about the situation in Ferguson, that much is true – it’s not a *skin* problem, but a *sin* problem

And the solution, is God’s forgiveness through Christ; *Through this man, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you* (Acts 13:38)*****

And if you’ve never *asked* him to forgive you, you need to

And if you have, but you’re still *harboring* things like rebellion, or anger, or abuse, or racism – do it again; And again and again if you have to; His grace is sufficient

7. To relieve our guilt – Jn 3:18

God sent his Son to relieve our guilt; **John 3:18**

Whoever believes in him [in Jesus] is not condemned [is not judged as guilty; is not worthy of punishment], but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

We start life in a state of unbelief, and condemnation

But when we believe in Jesus to save us and forgive us – he *lifts* that condemnation, and *relieves* our guilt

That’s why **Rom 8:1** says – *There is therefore now no condemnation* [no guilty verdict, no judgment] *for those who are in Christ Jesus* [in relationship with him].

So are you guilty, or relieved?

If you believe, you’re relieved; No matter how you feel*****

If you don’t, you’re still guilty, and headed toward punishment

8. To credit us with righteousness – Rom 4:24-25

God didn’t just give us Jesus to relieve us of something we couldn’t get rid of – our sin
But to give us something we couldn’t earn – righteousness

Rom 4:24-25 – *It [righteousness] will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

Jesus *died* for our *unrighteousness*, our *trespasses*, and rose again for our *righteousness*, our *justification*

Referring to God’s *declaration* of our righteousness, and *imputation* of it – two sides of the same coin of justification

One of the reasons God raised Jesus from the dead, was to credit us and consider us righteous, when we believe

So God not only removes the sin we can't get rid of, but gives us the righteousness we can't earn; *His* righteousness (2 Cor 5:21); In both cases, we can't, but God can And he will, if we believe – *it will be counted to us who believe* (Rom 4:24)***** You can take the sinner out of Babylon, but you can't take the Babylon out of the sinner; Only God can do that; And does; Through Christ

9. To adopt us into his family – John 1:11-13

John 1:11-13 – *He [Jesus] came to his own [the Jews], and his own people did not receive him [they didn't accept him as their Savior and Lord]. [12] But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name [who trusted in his power and love and authority], he gave the right to become children of God [no longer orphans, but heirs], [13] who were born, not of blood [not physically] nor of the will of the flesh [due to our desire for intimacy] nor of the will of man [b/c someone just decided on their own to be one of God's children], but of God.*

It's *God's* decision to adopt us into his family, and make us one of his own

- I saw a sign outside of a church one time, that said – “We're all God's children” And though I'm sure they were well meaning, nothing could be further from the truth We're all God's *creation*, and we're all made in his image – but we're *not* all God's children
God's children are only those who believe in Jesus and receive him into their life
Becoming an heir of his inheritance and blessing
Are you an heir or an orphan?

And then last, God gave us Jesus Christ . . .

10. To give us eternal life – John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (Jn 3:16)

God so loves you, that he sacrificed the life of his Son for you
So that you wouldn't die and go to hell, but die and live forever; In his presence
And it all depends on whether you believe; That's *our* response

But that's only where it starts; The *end* result, should be a life where we . . .

Our Response: Worship Christ, Walk with Christ, and Work for Christ

That's the goal; That's the life; That's why Jesus came; That's why he did what he did
So that we would bless the Lord with all that is within us
And draw near to him as we live our lives
And spend ourselves for the cause of his kingdom

Jesus didn't come to be casually admired; Or watched from afar; Or lightly served
He came to be worshipped; He came to be followed; He came to build his church, and use the sacrifice of our lives to do it

- So how about it? Do you worship him? Honoring him in all you think and do?
Do you walk with him? Making him the constant companion of your thoughts?
Do you work for him? Spending and being spent for his cause and his kingdom?

Do you serve him by serving others?
Are you growing in grace and truth?

Do you live his way and follow his lead?
Are you using your abilities to their fullest?
Do you talk about him as much as you can?
Do you love him with all your heart?

I hope so; B/c that's what it means to worship Christ, walk with Christ, and work for Christ; And given all that he's done and all that he is . . .

Keystone and cornerstone included – he's worthy
Worthy of our worship, worthy of our walk, and worthy of our work

Pray – We're so thankful for all you've done to save our souls, forgive our sins, and redeem us to be a people who are purified for your possession; So find us faithful to worship you, and walk with you, and work for you all the days of our lives
And receive our tithes and offerings now, as an expression of that

Close – Invitations; Parking – Harley unavailable during Christmas, so use the Northridge lot and take the shuttle; We could also use some help on our Parking Teams
Visitor Bags