

SERMON TITLE: Why Jesus Came
SCRIPTURE: 1 John 3:1-10; Genesis 3:15

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The wonder of Christ's coming into the world is, all too often, drowned out by a consumer-driven frenzy. And the problem is not just "out there." We know that as followers of Jesus we can also get swallowed up in the chaos of the holiday season. And even when we do slow down enough to think about our Savior's birth at Christmas, our thoughts can be more sentimental than Scriptural. Don't get me wrong, I do like some of the nostalgic, sentimental parts of Christmas. But as followers of Jesus, the sentiment of Christmas must not overshadow the Savior of Christmas.

Now, there are lots of verses that tell us "the reason for the season" as we are fond of saying—many reasons why Jesus came or why the Father sent Jesus into the world. For example, Jesus said, "*The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*" (Luke 19:10). He said, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:17). So, Jesus came to save us from our sins...*to forgive our sins...to remove the guilt and the penalty of our sins...to save us from the coming judgment of God.* And Jesus talked about the salvation he brings this way in John 10:10. He said—"I have come that you might have *life* and have it more abundantly." He said, "*I have come* as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me will not remain in darkness." (John 12:46) And there are many more statements like this that give us the BIG PICTURE of why Jesus *came*, or why Jesus *was sent* from the Father.

But the question is—*How did Jesus save us? How did he bring us God's salvation?* Here's how John the apostle answers that question, not from the Gospel that bears his name, but in the letter, we call 1 John.

READ 1 John 3:1-10, giving special attention to verse 5 and verse 8: "You know that Jesus appeared to take away sins" (v5). "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (v8). Together the two verses tell us that Jesus came to take away our sins by destroying the works of the devil.

I know, this "reason for the season" doesn't exactly give you all those warm, holiday, "Chestnuts-roasting-on-an-open-fire" kind of feeling inside. But until we realize that there's something in the world, *and* something in us that needs to be destroyed, we will miss the true "reason for the season."

The reason Jesus came that first Christmas was to destroy the works of the devil. And his works are accomplished through sin and all of the effects of sin in our lives and in the world today.

The devil's work started way back in the Garden of Eden (Read Genesis 3). Everything wrong and broken in this world is the work of the devil. The entire human race is guilty of sin—guilty of high treason against the rightful ruler of the world. The original sin was committed by our original parents, but we've all been infected. We all have the disease, the sickness. We all bear the same guilt. That's really bad news!

BUT—in the middle of all this bad news we see a hint of hope. God will not just throw up his hands and say to all the heavenly host, "Well, *that* didn't work out, did it?" God didn't give up on us or the world he created. *So where's the hope?* It's there in the story of all the fall in Genesis 3. It's tucked within God's pronouncement of a curse on the serpent. In Genesis 3:15 God is speaking to the serpent, *who we know from later Scripture is the devil.* And God says—"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall crush your head, and you shall crush his heel." In other words, one day, a Savior will come to crush the head of the serpent—to destroy the works of the devil. Bible geeks call this the proto-evangelium. The "first" (proto) mention of the "Gospel" (evangelium) of Jesus in the Bible.

And our Savior has come! Jesus is his name, Emmanuel, God with us. Born of Mary, descendant of Eve...born in Bethlehem...born in fulfillment of Jewish prophecy...born to die to set us free from sin and all its devilish effects. Jesus-lived-the-perfect-life., Yes, Satan bruised his heel at the cross, but Jesus willingly died in our place and won our salvation on our behalf. He satisfied God's rightful wrath for our sins. He removed the curse from us by taking the curse upon himself (see Galatians 3:13-14). And he removed the basis of Satan's accusations against us. So that now, all who entrust themselves to Jesus will never perish. Satan can never separate us from the love of God in Christ.

This is the reason for Christmas! Jesus came to deal with our greatest problem—our sin and guilt. He came to destroy the mortal enemy of our souls—the devil himself—and all of his works. So what does all this mean? ...

First, when you entrust yourself to Jesus, God empowers you to live a changed life (1John3:1-10).

Second, when you entrust yourself to Jesus, you can know that Jesus is restoring all things.

I would encourage you—if you haven't already come to Jesus and put your faith in him—I encourage to do that today. Simply tell God you want to change direction. You want Christmas to be the turning-around point in your life. Not that you are turning around to try harder to do better. NO, you are turning from your sin and turning to trust Jesus. You are asking him to forgive your sin, and give you his life with a whole set of new desires. I tell you, if you do that today, he'll begin to change you and you'll be forever grateful.

Merry Christmas! .I say with the apostle Paul: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under *your* feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Yes, Merry Christmas and Joy to the World!

Discussion Starters:

Icebreaker: What is your absolute favorite Christmas memory? In terms of the sentimental parts of Christmas, was are some of your "favorite things?"

Read 1 John 3:1-10

Now ask—"From what you heard in Charlie's message or what we just read. *What are some of the "AHAs" you had?* What did you hear that resonated with you? What new thoughts and insights did you have?"

When someone volunteers an "AHA," ask follow up questions to dig deeper and to keep the discussion going. Ask the group, "*Anyone else have this same "AHA"?* .*What do you think about this insight?*" After you've exhausted topic, throw the original question back out to the group, "*Who else had an "AHA?"*" —Repeat the pattern above. —

If someone says, "*I didn't really have an "AHA," it's more that I don't understand*" Then go that direction. Ask follow-up questions to help them clearly articulate the issue. "Anybody else think about that/struggle with that?" Ask the group for input, "*So, how would you answer that question?*" Whoever answers, ask follow up questions, ask for input from the group on that answer (*What do you think about that?*), etc.

The repeat the same conversation pattern by asking—*What's your "take-away" from the message and our discussion? What is one thing you can take-away and put into action?*