

Christmas Eve Service – O.I.C. 24/12/2015

Bible Reading – Matthew Chapter 1 v. 18-25.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” ²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” ²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

Introduction

To-morrow all over the world people will be celebrating Christmas.

It is a very big international festival. However to many people it has lost its original purpose. It is now a commercial enterprise, designed to make money for businesses and produce a feel good factor for people.

This evening I would like to bring you back to the original purpose of Christmas.

The place where we discover the original purpose of Christmas is in the Bible.

The Bible is a collection of 66 books. These books fit together like a puzzle.

When you complete the puzzle, you will discover that the main message of the Bible is about JESUS.

The true meaning of Christmas concerns the person of Jesus.

Tonight I would like to focus on one verse from the Bible which explains the main reason for the Christmas celebration. It is verse 23 of Matthew Chapter one.

²³ “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

This verse has been quoted by the writer Matthew from a book that was written about 700 years before the event of the birth of Jesus.

God communicated to the prophet Isaiah about an important event that was going to happen in

the future.

There are two important facts communicated to us from this verse.

These are No. 1 – A Virgin is going to have a baby

No. 2 – This baby is going to be God, coming to this earth.

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There are two questions that we need to ask of this verse.

1. What was the purpose of God coming to this earth?
2. Why did He come in such a humble and miraculous way?

The purpose of God coming to this earth is contained in v. 21.

²¹And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

God came to this earth to save us from our sins.

The problem with most people today is that they don't understand what sin is and therefore are not interested in being saved from it.

Firstly I want to explain what sin is. Then I will explain the consequences of sin. Hopefully after that you will want to be saved from it.

About 7,000 years ago, God created this world and everything in it.

He also created a man and they enjoyed a relationship together.

God was the creator-owner of the first person. God then created a woman to be a helper for that person.

God gave these people complete freedom to enjoy this world. They also enjoyed a good friendship with their creator. It was a 100% pure relationship.

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God gave these 2 people, Adam and Eve, one rule, with one consequence. Read Genesis 2: v. 15-17.

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¹⁵Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Sadly they were deceived by a fallen Angel called Satan into disobeying God's word. As a result death came into existence.

Also Adam and Eve became separated from God and their perfect relationship was broken.

The world God created was cursed and God send Adam and Eve out of His presence to another place.

So we see that sin is disobedience to God's word. It is ignoring our creator owner, going our own way and choosing to do what we want.

It is breaking God's rules for living.

Initially God gave one rule for living, but later He gave us 10 rules to live by. These were given to show us how bad we are compared to God's 100% Holiness. These rules are contained in the Bible in the book of Deuteronomy Chapter 5.

If we are honest we have all broken one of God's rules to live by.

We are also told in the Bible that as a result of Adam and Eve's sin, everybody born into this world is born in separation from their creator/owner and is destine to die and face punishment for their sins.

(Romans 5: v. 12)

¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

The Bible also tells us that God still loves mankind and sent His only Son Jesus Christ into this world to save us from the consequences of our sin.

(John 3: v. 16).

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

The big question is "How can God punish our sin and save us at the same time?"

The answer was to send us a substitute to take the punishment for our sin. It could not be a man, it had to be somebody 100% Holy to satisfy God's requirements.

The only person who met these requirements was Jesus, God in human form.

I will now answer my second question. Why did Jesus come in such a humble and miraculous way?

Let me give you an illustration. At my home in the Summer I have lots of ants. Some are very, very small. It would be impossible for me to really understand the life of an ant, unless I became an ant.

It would also be very difficult for ants to understand what I wanted to communicate to them

unless I became an ant.

God had a message to communicate to human mankind and He chose the best way to do that. That was to become a human being. To be born in the same way as us, except without sin. This is why Jesus had to be born through a virgin and not by the seed of man.

If Jesus was born through the seed of a man then He would not be 100% Holy and be cursed like everybody else who is born into this world.

So the reason for celebrating Christmas is to thank God for sending JESUS as the Savior of mankind. Emmanuel – God with us.

However Christmas is not much of a Celebration if you don't benefit from the greatest Christmas present of all.

That is being forgiven by Jesus for all your sins and the promise of eternal life with Him in Heaven one day.

Jesus only rescues people who realize their sin and want to be rescued.

He never forces Himself into your life. He has to be invited by us.

If God has spoken to your heart today, please remain behind to talk with somebody about this.

We have people who will talk with you and pray with you tonight.

I close with the words of a famous hymn.

God sent His Son, they called Him Jesus
He came to love, heal and forgive
He lived and died, to buy my pardon
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow
Because He lives, all fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living just because He lives

Because Jesus is alive today He can forgive you for your sins.

Q. Will you trust Him today?