

A GIFT TOO WONDERFUL FOR WORDS

“Christmas: When God Came Downstairs with a Baby in His Arms”

Study Number Seven – The Christmas Story from the Book of Hebrews – Hebrews 10:1-17

Here’s a great poem about Christmas:

‘Twas the Night Before Jesus Came

‘Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house
Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.
Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care
In hopes that Jesus would not come there.

The children were dressing to drawl into bed,
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.
And mom in her rocker with baby on her lap
Was watching the Late Show while I took a nap.

When out of the east there arose such a clatter,
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!

When what to my wondering eyes should appear

But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here.
With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray
I knew in a moment this must be THE DAY!

The light of His face made me cover my head
It was Jesus returning just like He had said.
And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth,
I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.

In the Book of Life which He held in His hand
Was written the name of every saved man.
He spoke not a word as He searched for my name;
When He said “It’s not here” my head hung in shame.

The people whose names had been written with love
He gathered to take to His Father above.
With those who were ready He rose without a sound
While all the rest were left standing around.

I fell to my knees, but it was too late;
I had waited too long and thus sealed my fate.
I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight;
Oh, if only I had been ready tonight.

In the words of this poem the meaning is clear;
The coming of Jesus is drawing near.
There’s only one life and when comes the last call
We’ll find that the Bible was true after all!
(source unknown)

First Corinthians describe that:

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

We're looking at Hebrews 10:1-17. The outline of the passage is:

- I. The REASON for Christmas—verses 1-4,
- II. The RECORD of Christmas—verses 5-10, and
- III. The RESULT of Christmas—verses 11-17

Let's use one word for each of the three parts.

What is the REASON for Christmas? The three-lettered word: SIN—S-I-N.

What is the RECORD of Christmas? Not the Nativity scene, but the SACRIFICE, which takes place on Calvary.

What's the RESULT of Christmas? That great big word—SALVATION.

SIN,

SACRIFICE, and

SALVATION.

Now let's look together at these verses as we explore something to chew upon and to make Christmas meaningful to each of us.

I. The REASON for Christmas—verses 1-4

v. 1 For the law, having a shadow of the good things coming, and not the image itself of the actual things, is never able by means of the same sacrifices which they are offering continually year after year, to make perfect those who are drawing near.

“For the law, having a shadow of the good things coming, and not the image itself of the actual things, is never able by means of the same sacrifices which they are offering continually year after year, to make perfect those who are drawing near.”

Now there are TWO PHRASES in that first verse that are critical.

1. “never able” and
2. “make perfect.”

No matter what sacrifice we make, no matter what offering we bring, it will never be able—by means of that same sacrifice—for us to be acceptable in God’s presence.

Notice the first phrase, “For the law [is] a shadow of good things coming.”

The Law points us to a **NEED**.

The Law points us to what has to take place before we can be acceptable in God’s sight.

Paul, when he’s describing the function of the Law in Romans chapter 3, says that “every mouth may be stopped and all the world to become guilty before God.” (ref. Romans 3:19)

The Law cannot make us right with God, cannot bring us to Him. It’s a “shadow of good things coming.” It is “not the image itself of the actual things.”

And that little phrase, it “is never able” to do anything, as far as bringing us into the right relationship with God.

We are prone to live that way. So many people say they have tried to live by the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, and the Ten Commandments. And they’re doing the best that they can. That theology sounds very pious. It’s almost Avis® in nature—we try harder.

And we just try and try and try to gain this acceptance into God's presence, to come nearer to Him. But that reminds us of that other phrase in verse 1. What does it say? The Law "is never able"—WHAT?—"to make perfect."

God demands perfection. And that ought to immediately cause us, with normal intellect, to accept the fact that we have no hope. If God demands perfection, we're sinful. So therefore we have no hope.

That's the reason for Christmas. We're not perfect. We're sinful. Romans 3:23 says:

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

The Law is never able "to make perfect"—WHAT?—"those who are drawing near."

What do we want this morning from God? We want acceptance by Him! We want to be able to feel that God really loves us and He's looking down and smiling on us today, and He accepts us. That's our only hope for when we die, that we will be accepted in the Beloved.

We want access right now, don't we? We want to be able to talk to Him and feel like He's listening. And He's doing something about the things we talk to Him about, because we have a relationship with Him.

This first verse tells us that the Law cannot do that. It is never able to make a person perfect, those who would be drawing near to Him to have this acceptance and this access. Instead, the Law shuts us out.

Galatians 2:16

by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified in His sight...

Now what the writer does here is after he makes a statement like that, then he asks a question. That's what verse 2 is.

v. 2 Since then would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, once having been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

“Since then would they not have ceased to be offered,”

If there was a sacrifice that was going to do the job and an offering that would make us right with God.

“because the worshippers, once having been cleansed, would no longer have the consciousness of sins?”

If the Law could do it and we came to it, and we began to live by it, then one sacrifice ought to do it. And by then everybody has been cured and everything is fine.

v. 3 But in them (the sacrifices) there is a reminder of sins year by year.

“But”—CONTRAST—“in them (that is the sacrifices) there is a reminder of sins year by year.”

Every time they come to the Day of Atonement it reminds them of sin and the fact that they’ve been shut out from God’s presence.

Nobody dared go into God’s presence except the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, and he had to have blood to sprinkle on the Mercy Seat. And the whole nation held its breath while he went inside the Holy of holies to sprinkle that blood, because man has been shut out from God’s presence. There is no hope.

Verse 4 summarizes that very beautifully.

v. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins.

“For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins.”

What’s the reason for Christmas? The reason for Christmas is the universal sin of mankind. And only God taking action can solve the problems of sinful man and His perfection.

Don’t try to bring God down to us this Christmas and think

that God is going to overlook all these little things, and cancel His rules for us. God is perfectly holy and righteous and He demands that from His children.

And because we don't have it, that's the reason for Christmas. God has to do something to solve the problem. Want a principle?

Christmas is God taking action to solve the sin problem.

There's a reason. The Law can never do it, therefore God must do something.

Now let's look at the record of Christmas. There's a wonderful phrase in verse 5.

II. The RECORD of Christmas—verses 5-10

v. 5 Therefore, when He is coming into the world, He is saying: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me.

“Therefore,”

Whenever we find a “therefore,” we find out what it's there for, right?

Therefore since the Law can't do it.

Therefore since man's sin makes it impossible for him to be

accepted by a perfectly holy God.

“Therefore, when He”—WHO? Jesus—“is coming into the world,”—there’s Christmas.

What the writer does is take Psalm 40 and put it on the lips of the Lord Jesus in what’s being said here is recorded in Psalm 40:6-8. But it is the words that Jesus is speaking as He gets ready for Christmas.

“Therefore, when He”—Jesus—“is coming into the world, He is saying: ‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but’—WHAT?—“but a body you prepared for me.”—that’s Christmas.

That is the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. Isaiah 7:14 says:

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: the virgin will be with a child and will give birth to a Son and will call Him Immanuel.

Jesus says, “a body has been prepared for Me. You didn’t want My sacrifices. You didn’t want My offerings. You got a body ready for Me. This was Your plan to solve sin’s problems, to prepare a body.”

And He prepared that body in the virgin’s womb so that she might give birth on that first Christmas day. Oh, doesn’t that

make Galatians 4:4-5 just jump off the page?

Galatians 4:4-5

When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son...

Doesn't that make Luke chapters 1 and 2 meaningful? God prepared a body for His Son.

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us...

We read in Philippians 2 that Jesus Christ "emptied Himself, and took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (ref. Philippians 2:6-7)

Isaiah 9:6

Unto us a child is born, and unto us a Son is given.

It's almost like that was just saying something the same way a second time.

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." And then Charles Spurgeon said this and it triggered some real thoughts about Christmas:

As Jesus Christ is a child in His human nature, He is born, begotten of the Holy Ghost, born of a Virgin Mary. He is a

truly born, as certainly as a child, as any other man that ever lived upon the face of the earth. He is thus in His humanity a child born. But as Jesus Christ is God's Son, He is not born, but given, begotten of His Father from before all the worlds, begotten—not made, being of the same substance with the Father.

(source unknown)

“Unto us a little child was born,”—a body was prepared—
“unto us a Son was given.”—Jesus Christ, God's Son was given.

John 3:16

He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...

So when we celebrate Christmas, we realize that Jesus Christ is coming to a body that's been prepared for Him.

It says, “a body you prepared for me.” Remember in the Upper Room and the last thing Jesus ever said? He said: “I'm going to prepare a place for you.” (ref. John 14:3)

God prepared a body for Him, He's gone to prepare a place for us. Doesn't that make it meaningful? A body's been prepared for Him so that He can prepare a place for us. And because He took that body and He did something with it, as we're going to see here in just a minute, He's able now to prepare a place and promise us that we can spend eternity with Him because of what He did.

v. 6 In whole burnt offerings also for sin you took no pleasure.

“In whole burnt offerings also for sin you took no pleasure.”

v. 7 Then I said: ‘Behold, I have come, in the roll of the book it is written concerning me, to do your will, O God.’”

“Then I said: “Behold, I have come, in the roll of the book”—or in the scroll of the book—“it is written concerning me, to do your will, O God.””

“I don’t want to do it.”

In back of those words are the words in the Garden of Gethsemane in Luke 22. He withdrew a stone’s throw away and He said, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done.” (ref. Luke 22:42)

Hebrews 5:8

Although He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered;

That picture is there in those verses.

“it is written concerning me, to do your will, O God.”

v. 8 After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings also for sins you did not desire nor have pleasure in, which are being offered according to law.”

“After saying above, ‘Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings also for sins you did not desire nor have pleasure in, which are being offered according to the law.’”

v. 9 Then He said: “Behold I have come to do your will.” He is taking away the first in order that He may establish the second.

“Then He said: ‘Behold I have come to do your will.’ He is taking away the first in order that He may establish the second.”

What does that mean?

“He is taking away” the Law.

“He is taking away” human performance.

“He is taking away” one thing that He might “establish” the other. What is the other?

The other is God saying, “Look, I know we’ve got a problem.” It is God saying, “There is no hope. I demand perfection and I will not surrender that. I’m holy. I’m righteous. I’m just. I

know that the guilty sinner ought to die. Sin is the problem. What will I do? I will take away the first. I will take the Law and its demands, and I will replace it with unmerited favor.”

An act of God’s love and grace in providing for us the greatest Christmas gift that could ever be provided. Just take it! It’s ours in Jesus Christ.

“I’m taking away one and I’m establishing a second.”

Now get verse 10—here it comes. This is the wrap up on this second point.

v. 10 By means of which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

“By means of which will we have been sanctified”—or set apart—“through”—WHAT?—“the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

Jesus Christ took that body that was given to Him in the Nativity, carried it for 33 years to Calvary and became the PERFECT SACRIFICE.

That “body of Jesus Christ” was made a PERFECT OFFERING FOR SIN, to satisfy all the offerings of sin that were ineffective in the past and to die on Calvary. That’s what John the Baptist meant when he said, “Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” (ref. John 1:29)

What happens when we by faith reach out and take that gift of Jesus Christ? We are instantaneously declared righteous in God's sight. And how righteous are we declared? PERFECT.

We are declared as righteous as His own Son, Jesus Christ.

Maybe we don't feel like it, but God said it, we believe it, that settled it. It has nothing to do with our feelings. The minute we receive Jesus Christ we are declared righteous and perfect in God's sight, and that's what He demands.

And only Jesus Christ could meet those demands that we might have life today and celebrate Christmas.

The hymn writer says it well:

I hear the Savior say,
Thy strength indeed is small,
Child of weakness, watch and pray
Find in Me thine all in all.

Lord, now indeed I find
Thy power and thine alone
Can change the leper's spots
And melt the heart of stone.

For nothing good have I
Whereby thy grace to claim.
I'll wash my garments white

In the blood of Calvary's Lamb.

And when before the throne
I stand in Him complete,
Jesus died my soul to save,
My lips shall still repeat.

Jesus paid it all
All to Him I owe.
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.
(source unknown)

One poet said:

Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience rest or wash away the stain.
(source unknown)

The false supposition is not Avis® saying “We try harder! I’ll do my best and God will do the rest!” That sounds sanctimonious, but that’s not right.

Jesus paid it all! God wants the glory for a relationship not a joint venture! There’s really no sharing of glory with Him.

Ephesians 2:8, 9

For by grace you’ve been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not of works, lest any man

should boast.

What are some things that are ramifications of this? In Romans 5 we read this:

Romans 5:1

Therefore having been made righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

By whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand and we hope in the glory of God.

We've either experienced the new birth or we haven't.

Isaiah 64:6 is right:

Isaiah 64:6

All our righteousnesses are like filthy rags...

God stamps rejection on human works and legal performances and candles and ceremonies and prayers and altars and money and service. He says, "I want you! I want your heart! Take the gift of My Son."

To Nicodemus, 70 years old, leader of the Sanhedrin, he asked to hear the divine imperative, "You must be born again." (ref. John 3:3)

We either are or we aren't. So many are still looking for the Messiah! Messiah has come!

“Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,” the Isaiah prophet speaks to the Rabbi. “He was wounded and afflicted for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we have been healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. And He's turned it unto His own way and the Lord hath on Him the iniquity of us all” (ref. Isaiah 53:4-6)

We either have the Son or we don't have the Son. We have Him or we don't.

John 10:28-29

I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall anyone pluck them out of My hand...

We either do or we don't! We either know or we don't know! Don't clabber with all of these confusing things!

Salvation is a divine act of God in response to our faith. It's His unmerited favor toward us, declaring us perfectly righteous in Jesus Christ.

We can never lose that. Once we've been born we can't be unborn! Once we've been declared righteous, we can't be declared unrighteous!

God does not change His mind! He does not make a promise and then alters the promise on the basis of human performance.

Numbers 23:19 is a passage we have to deal with if we believe that:

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, that He should lie,
Not a son of man, that He should repent;
Has He said, and will He not do it?
Has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

Understanding salvation is a point action decision and not a process!

We don't all of a sudden come to know Jesus Christ over a process of time! We are declared righteous when the gavel falls! And when God makes a ruling!

And once that happens, my beloved brother and sister in Jesus Christ, there's nothing that will change that. We are declared righteous in God's sight. God makes a ruling.

If someone believes that we can gain our salvation and then lose it, then they don't have it.

The reason is that the focus is in the wrong place. They have it on human performance and on the keeping of the Law, not

on a God of grace who is faithful to His promise. He's a big God and He forgives sin and He makes people righteous, perfectly in Jesus Christ in answer to their faith to receive Christ as Savior.

And we must declare it unequivocally.

Ephesians 2:13

Now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Jesus Christ.

They were coming near in verse 1, but they were turned away. There was no acceptance or access by the Law. Acceptance and access into God's presence only comes through Jesus Christ.

What's the REASON for Christmas?

The SIN of man.

What is the RECORD of Christmas?

The SACRIFICE of that body that was prepared for Him that He took and placed on Calvary's Cross. He didn't want to do that, but He did it.

Doesn't that make Calvary meaningful? Jesus Christ said, "My God, My God! Why have You forsaken Me." (ref. Matthew 27:46) He's being made sin for us and knew no sin that we

might be made the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ.

It is He who said, “Tetelestai! It is finished!” (ref. John 19:30)

That means the work is done! The gift is ready! He can put it under the Christmas tree! Anyone who comes can take it! It is a universal offer, that sin is forgiven and to be declared righteous in God’s sight perfectly.

It’s the only passport to heaven. It’s the basis for the new birth. It’s how a man gets right with God.

We can hear Isaiah the prophet saying:

Isaiah 1:18

Come now, let us reason together,
Though your sins be as scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They shall be as wool.

God wants a relationship and not a performance.

In Isaiah 1 we read this beautiful verse. This is a little extensive, but it is very beautifully done:

(No Room for Him by J. Vernon McGee)

In the early part of the Civil War, one dark Saturday morning

in the dead of winter, a young woman, twenty-two years old, died in a Commercial Hospital in Cincinnati. She had once been beautiful and the pride of respectable parents. Highly educated and accomplished, she might have shown in the best society. But she was stubborn and willful and would not listen to the warnings. She played with fire and called it “fun.” One day she awoke to find herself ruined by a fatal mistake which she could not erase. She was fallen.

She spent the rest of her young life in disgrace and shame, and died poor and friendless, a broken-hearted outcast. Among her personal effects was found a manuscript, the poem, “Beautiful Snow” which was immediately carried to Enos B. Reed, editor of the National Union. In the columns of that paper, on the morning following the girl’s death, the poem appeared in print for the first time. When the paper containing the poem came out on Sunday morning, the body of the victim had not yet received burial. The attention of Thomas Buchanan Reed, one of first American poets, was soon directed to the newly published lines, and was so taken with the stirring pathos, that he immediately followed the corpse to its final resting place.

Such are the plain facts concerning her whose “Beautiful Snow” will be long regarded as one of the brightest gems in American literature. [And I quote:]

Oh! the snow, the beautiful snow,
Filling the sky and earth below,
Over the housetops, over the street,
Over the heads of the people we meet.
Dancing—flirting—skipping along,

Beautiful snow, it can do no wrong.
Clinging to lips in frolicsome freak,
Trying to kiss a fair lady's cheek,
Beautiful snow from heaven above,
Pure as an angel, gentle as love.

Oh! the snow, the beautiful snow,
How the flakes gather and laugh as they go,
Whirling around in maddening fun,
Cheering the heart and dispelling the gloom.
Chasing—laughing—hurrying by,
It lightens the face and sparkles the eye.
Rollicking dogs with a bark and a bound,
Snap at the crystals which eddy around.
The town is alive and its heart is a glow,
To welcome the coming of the beautiful snow!

How wildly the crowd goes swaying along,
Hailing each other with humor and song,
How gay are the sleighs, like the stars flashing by,
Are bright for a moment, then lost to the eye.
Ringing—swinging—dashing they go,
Over the crest of the beautiful snow,
Snow that's so pure when it falls from the sky,
That it makes one regret that it's fated to lie,
And be trampled and muddied by thousands of feet,
'Til it blends with the horrible filth of the street.

Once I was pure as the snow, but I fell,
Fell like the snowflakes from heaven to hell;

Fell to be trampled as filth in the street,
Fell to be scoffed at, to be spit on and beat,
Pleading—cursing—dreading to die,
Selling my soul to whoever would buy,
Dealing in shame for a morsel of bread,
Hating the living and fearing the dead.
Merciful God! have I fallen so low?
And yet I was once like the beautiful snow.

Once I was fair as the beautiful snow,
With an eye like a crystal, a heart like its glow,
Once I was loved for my innocent grace,
Flattered and sought for the charms of my face.
Father—Mother—Sisters—All,
God and myself I have lost by the fall.
The vilest wretch that goes shivering by,
Will make a wide sweep lest I wander too nigh;
For all that is on or above me, I know
There is nothing so pure as the beautiful snow.

How strange it should be that this beautiful snow,
Should fall on a sinner with nowhere to go;
How strange it should be when the night comes again;
If the snow and the ice struck my desperate brain.
Fainting—freezing—dying alone,
Too wicked for prayer, too weak for a moan,
To be heard in the streets of the crazy town,
Gone mad in the joy of the snow coming down!
To be and to die in my terrible woe,
With a bed and a shroud of the beautiful snow.

Helpless and foul as the trampled snow,
Sinner, despair not, Christ stoopeth low,
To rescue the soul that is lost in sin
And raise it to life and enjoyment again.
Groaning—bleeding—dying for thee,
The Crucified hung on that cursed tree,
His accents of mercy fall soft on thine ear.
“Is there mercy for me? Will He heed my weak prayer?”
O God! in the stream that for sinners did flow,
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
pp. 21-23

So many have given excuses that it's too late. It is never too late! If salvation indeed is a gift—and it is—and its point of action is to receive it, then today is the day of salvation! Today is the opportunity for you to give up on human performance and take the blessed gift of His Son to be made whiter than snow.

Can God declare the sinner perfectly righteous? Can God drop all the charges? Can God set the prisoner free?

The answer is YES! YES! YES!

He breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the prisoner free.

Sin demanded a sacrifice that leads to salvation.

III. The RESULT of Christmas—verses 11-17

v. 11 And indeed, every priest has stood day by day performing his sacred service and time after time offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

We can tell Paul is excited here.

“And indeed, every priest has stood day by day performing his sacred service and time after time offering the same sacrifices,”—WHAT?—“which can never take away sins.”

Verse 4—it’s impossible.

Verse 11—it says to us that it “can never take away sin.”

This sin problem is the problem that brings about Christmas.

v. 12 But this Priest, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,

“But”—CONTRAST—“this Priest,”—WHO? Jesus—“having”—WHAT?—“offered one sacrifice for sins”—WHAT?—“for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,”

This Priest, who is a Prophet, Priest and King—He comes. He offers one sacrifice, the sacrifice of Himself and then He sits down and He does it “for sin for all time”—Jesus Christ.

He made the sacrifice of Himself on Calvary.

It is now finished. What's He doing now?

v. 13 waiting from that time onward: Until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.

“waiting from that time onward:”—WHAT?—“Until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.”

What's the Lord doing? He's “waiting.”

1. He's “waiting” for sinners to come to Him. “He's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (ref. 2 Peter 3:9)
2. He's “waiting” for Christians to learn the lesson of turning their lives over to Him.
3. He's “waiting” for the coming kingdom, when the call is going to be that the body is complete, His bride is ready, and Jesus Christ comes back again.

v. 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

“For”—WHAT?—“by one offering”—what'd He do?—“He has perfected”—there's our word again.

“He has perfected for”—how long?—“for all time”

At the moment we receive Christ, we are made perfect in Jesus Christ. And that never can be changed. It is “for all time.”

“those who are being”—set apart or—“sanctified in Jesus Christ.”

See the finality of it? He came, He offered Himself—one sacrifice. Having done it, He sat down. He did it completely, “for all time,” and He is coming again to set up His kingdom.

And by that one offering, He perfected for all time “those who have been sanctified.”

Salvation is a POINT, not a PROCESS. It’s an EVENT, not a LONG PERIOD OF TIME when we go through the doldrums of wondering if we have or we haven’t.

We know whether we have or we haven’t. We know whether we have peace with God. We know whether we feel comfortable about the thought of dying and going into His presence, because we’re going into His presence with the perfection and the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ if we know Him.

We have access—we talked to Him this morning. We felt good. Our hearts overflowed with joy as we sang and as we prayed. It’s there!

We hope to know this Christmas season that when He comes back, we certainly aren't going to be left here without our name in the Book of Life.

If He came tonight, we'd be ready. Our name is inscribed there. At the moment we made that decision, the Spirit of God took out that great pen and He put our name there in the Book of Life. And we're ready for that time that comes.

Now notice the last three verses.

v. 15 And the Holy Spirit is also bearing witness to us; for after having said:

“And the Holy Spirit is also bearing witness to us; for after having said:”

v. 16 “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I am putting my laws upon their hearts, and upon their minds I will write them.

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I am putting my laws upon their hearts, and upon their minds I will write them.”

And what's verse 17 say?

v. 17 And their sins and their lawless deeds, I will positively not remember anymore.”

“And their sins and their lawless deeds, I will positively”—
absolutely—“not remember anymore.””

Oh bless God for that glorious truth!

We have these lessons that come out of our passage:

Lesson #1: We have seen the **REASON** for Christmas. It’s the sin of man and the inability of the Law to make it possible for man to gain acceptance and access into the presence of God who demands perfection.

Lesson #2: We have the **RECORD** of Christmas. Jesus Christ came to a body prepared for Him in order that through the offering of that body He might provide a way of salvation once for all.

Lesson #3: We have the **RESULTS** of Christmas. It is the forgiveness of sin and the declaration of righteousness. It is salvation for all those who will receive Jesus Christ, for by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

As we come to this final thought, what is it that really bothers us? Some say that they’ve done too much or it’s too late or they’ve been really bad for too long.

Salvation is a point action, and if we swallow our pride and repent of our sin and receive Jesus Christ, we are declared

whiter than snow, perfect! Sin is gone—cancelled, cast away!
It's not too late for anyone!

Need some more verses on that?

Psalm 103:12-14

As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed my transgressions from me...

Micah 7:18, 19

Who is a God like Thee, who pardons iniquity
And passed over the rebellious act of the remnant of His
possession? ...casts them into the depths of the sea.

Isaiah 38:17

You have put all my sins behind your back.

Jesus Christ completely frees us from the past. He wipes the
slate completely clean! He does deal with the sin problem
perfectly.

Isaiah 52:7 is very meaningful:

Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,

who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion,
“Your God reigns!”

The problem is the tragedy of Christmas.

John 1:11, 12

He came unto His own and His own received Him not. That as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name.

Have you? Do you know Jesus Christ? Is He your Savior?

What’s the REASON for Christmas? The SIN of mankind.

What’s the RECORD of Christmas? It’s Jesus Christ taking a body in a little Nativity scene, to carry it for 33 years to a cruel Cross to die for that sin.

And what does that do?

It paid it all,
All to Him I owe,

Salvation is the RESULT.

Behind all the tinsel and the lights and the trees, put three

words to let them be the backdrop for Christmas this year:

SIN,

SACRIFICE, and

SALVATION.

J. Vernon McGee tells a very interesting story as he concludes his Christmas message:

(The Cross is God's Christmas Tree by J. Vernon McGee)

During World War I in a British detachment had been cut off from the main forces in the front lines. They had gone out to explore and had been caught in the terrific fire of the enemy. Their communication line had remained open but finally was severed by a shell. The captain called for a volunteer who would trace the line to the point of trouble, bring it together and tie it. He warned that it would be a dangerous assignment. Several volunteered and one was chosen. He crawled into No Man's Land and followed the wire. Finally he found one end in a shell hole, and feeling around in the mud, he discovered the other end. But he could not bring the ends into a position to tie them together, for the enemy had him now under fire. He just lay there and held the two wires together so that communication was restored. However a shell fell close to him and exploded. He was killed, yet the communication was not disturbed. The next day after victory they found this man frozen in death, one line locked in his

right hand, and the other in his left hand, and through his body the message had been passing.

Nineteen hundred years ago there came down from heaven One who restored communication through a line that had been broken by sin. He laid hold of God because He was God, and He laid hold of man because He was man. He could not make the connection by His life; it was made when He died on the cross.

The British government took a picture of that man performing his duty in death and underneath they wrote one word, CONTACT!

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Maybe we feel lost today and in desperate need of contact. God is waiting. He's provided all that's necessary. We must receive the totally adequate gift of His Son and be declared righteous in His sight.

Father, we recognize that the greatest thing we can do to show our love and appreciation to You at Christmastime is to receive the Gift that You put under the tree of Calvary. Please Father if there are those that have been terribly confused over years and months of teaching that's been confusing, that You'd bring them to the clarity of truth that it's an act. It's a decision that is made, but as a result of that, that the judicial requirements of a holy God are met in Jesus Christ and they are made righteous in Him. Please our Father, liberate us of our pride and our preconceived notions and our ideas. Enable us humbly to come to Calvary and there to celebrate a real Christmas by making contact with the living God. In Jesus'

name we pray. Amen.

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A GIFT TOO WONDERFUL FOR WORDS

“Christmas: When God Came Downstairs with a Baby in His Arms”

Study Number Seven – The Christmas Story from the Book of Hebrews – Hebrews 10:1-17

NOTES

I. The REASON for Christmas—verses 1-4

v. 1 For the law, having a shadow of the good things coming, and not the image itself of the actual things, is never able by means of the same sacrifices which they are offering continually year after year, to make perfect those who are drawing near.

v. 2 Since then would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, once having been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

v. 3 But in them (the sacrifices) there is a reminder of sins year by year.

v. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins.

II. The RECORD of Christmas—verses 5-10

v. 5 Therefore, when He is coming into the world, He is saying: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me.

v. 6 In whole burnt offerings also for sin you took no pleasure.

v. 7 Then I said: ‘Behold, I have come, in the roll of the book it is written concerning me, to do your will, O God.’”

v. 8 After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings also for sins you did not desire nor have pleasure in, which are being offered according to law.”

v. 9 Then He said: “Behold I have come to do your will.” He is taking away the first in order that He may establish the second.

NOTES

v. 10 By means of which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

III. The RESULT of Christmas—verses 11-17

v. 11 And indeed, every priest has stood day by day performing his sacred service and time after time offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

v. 12 But this Priest, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,

v. 13 waiting from that time onward: Until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.

v. 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

v. 15 And the Holy Spirit is also bearing witness to us; for after having said:

v. 16 “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I am putting my laws upon their hearts, and upon their minds I will write them.

v. 17 And their sins and their lawless deeds, I will positively not remember anymore.”

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

Lesson #1: We have seen the REASON for Christmas. It's the sin of man and the inability of the Law to make it possible for man to gain acceptance and access into the presence of God who demands perfection.

Lesson #2: We have the RECORD of Christmas. Jesus Christ came to a body prepared for Him in order that through the offering of that body He might provide a way of salvation once for all.

Lesson #3: We have the RESULTS of Christmas. It is the forgiveness of sin and the declaration of righteousness. It is salvation for all those who will receive Jesus Christ, for by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

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