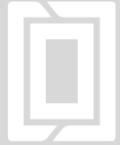


## WHY CHRISTMAS? part 1 Hebrews 2:5-10



December 16, 2018 | DAVID ANDERSON

What if Christ had never come? What if there were no Christmas? What would happen to the little communities of Glendora, Azusa, La Verne, San Dimas, and Covina if there were no baby Jesus? If Jesus had never come, what would happen with you, your children and your grandchildren?

The Book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who were suffering because of their allegiance to Christ. Their overwhelming temptation was to return to Jewish worship - return to the temple, to the sacrifices, to Moses, to set aside Christ and go back to the Law. Because of this, you have the Book of Hebrews where the writer lays out one of the greatest theologies on Jesus in all of Scripture. The argument of Hebrews is - why go back to what is inferior? Jesus is greater than Moses, Jesus is greater than Joshua, Jesus is greater than the Law, and Jesus is greater than Aaron and Melchizedek. Jesus is greater than the angels.

The Law gave us irrefutable proof that we are broken and need to be healed by the perfect High Priest Jesus Christ. The Law and God's righteousness are fulfilled and upheld by faithful, perfect Israel, Jesus Christ. He has fulfilled the law perfectly, because Israel couldn't and neither can we. There were 83 different "human" high priests, but now there is one perfect High Priest who will never be replaced. In chapter 1, the writer of Hebrews wants us to join the angels in worshiping Christ, who has been appointed heir over all things, who made the worlds and upholds all things by the word of His power (1:1-4). But the absolute shock in all human history is what the writer of Hebrews describes next:

### **The superiority and uniqueness of Jesus Christ when it comes to you and me is not that He exists, but that HIS LOVE CAME FOR US.**

His radiance is introduced in chapter 1, but his glory is perfected in His humiliation and suffering as He resurrects the glory and dignity of the human race. Even the glorious angels could never restore the glory and dignity of humanity. The suffering, humiliation, and humanity of Christ wasn't weakness; rather, it was one of His crowning achievements of His superiority and sufficiency. Jesus says - I came on Christmas to suffer death to resurrect your glory and dignity!

*<sup>5</sup> For he did not put the world to come, about which we are speaking, under the control of angels.*

*<sup>6</sup> Instead someone testified somewhere: "What is man that you think of him or the son of man that you care for him?" <sup>7</sup> You made him lower than the angels for a little while. You crowned him with glory and honor. (Heb. 2:5-7)*

The writer of Hebrews is quoting Psalm 8, which is a devotional commentary on Genesis 1:26-28. David says in Psalm 8: When I look at the heavens, which your fingers made, and see the moon and the stars which you set in place - what is man that you think of him or the son of man that you care for him?

What makes us more spectacular than the moon and the stars? What is man that God should think of him? At the very core of who we are, what makes us unique over all creation, every animal, every creature on this earth is described in Genesis 1:27, "God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them."

What does it mean that we are made in the image of God? An image is created to reflect. Who do we reflect? We reflect God's glory in a way that no one else can. We have a capacity to reflect His character & love like no other creature can. He has entrusted us to lead the earth as His representatives. This is what it means that we have been crowned with glory and honor. We reflect and mirror His divine glory to a lost and dying world.

You can go on billions of journeys in the celestial world and you will never, ever see anything equal to the light, the divine glory that radiates out of human beings. Even on our worst day, we are image-bearers and vice-regents of the Almighty, full of glory and honor.

*You put all things under his control." For when he put all things under his control, he left nothing outside of his control. At present we do not yet see all things under his control. (Heb. 2:8)*

God made man to rule, but things are not the way they should be. This is not hard to agree with. At present all things are not under the glorious ruling of man; sin and suffering are ruling the day.

There was a historic fall. There was a man and woman with their God. The garden where they lived was called Delight (Eden). But Satan appealed to man to break him from the One who was their life and being. The woman bit and man followed. When sin entered the world, all that began to unravel, like a knit sweater coming apart stitch by stitch. Darkness descended and thorns grew. The same pattern followed for the children of Israel. They too were given a land like Eden, a land flowing with milk and honey. They were sons and daughters of Abraham, but also sons and daughters of Adam, and their sin cost them their garden too. They too were dragged into exile like Adam and Eve. The same pattern followed for you and me. Man has become a slave to his own nature, a slave to his own lust, a slave to his own greed. He has poisoned his own well. He has sawed off the limb he so confidently climbed onto. Things are dark and the image of God is faint. David and the author of Hebrews are correct when they say, "we do not yet see all things put under him."

*<sup>9</sup> But we see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by God's grace he would experience death on behalf of everyone. <sup>10</sup> For it was fitting for him, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (Heb. 2:9-10)*

How was our glory and dignity restored? For it was fitting for Christ to attain this proven perfection through sufferings. In order for Christ to lead many sons to glory, he had to succeed where we failed. We have all suffered and failed to be perfected by suffering but He hasn't failed. *And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Phi 2:8).*

What made Jesus lower than the angels for a little while? It was His amazing love! Our hell became His, so that His heaven might become ours. The pioneer, the hero of all human history has come! Human dignity was destroyed by sin but resurrected by Christ. Christ came as the last, perfect qualified Adam and lived perfect, sinless life, suffered and died in our place. His suffering qualified Him as our Redeemer

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### DON'T PLAY IT SAFE!

Do you recognize groaning within you? That groaning, that unsettledness has to do with us eagerly waiting the full expression of our glory and dignity as human beings (Rom. 8:21-24). A day is coming for each of us where the glorious liberty of the children of God will be revealed.

But in the meantime, our Christmas message is – don't play it safe!

- Don't play it safe in relationships.
- Don't play it safe with God or His people.
- Don't play it safe in addressing your addiction, pain and sin.
- Don't play it safe in expressing your gifts in the Body of Christ.
- Don't play it safe in using your time, energy, and resources in proclaiming the Gospel of grace.
- Don't play it safe with your love this Christmas season!

*There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket – safe, dark, motionless, airless – it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love is Hell. –C.S. Lewis*

Why did Jesus come? Why Christmas? Jesus says - I came on Christmas to suffer death to resurrect your glory and dignity! Don't play it safe!